TRUE-MAN

THE MAXIMORTAL

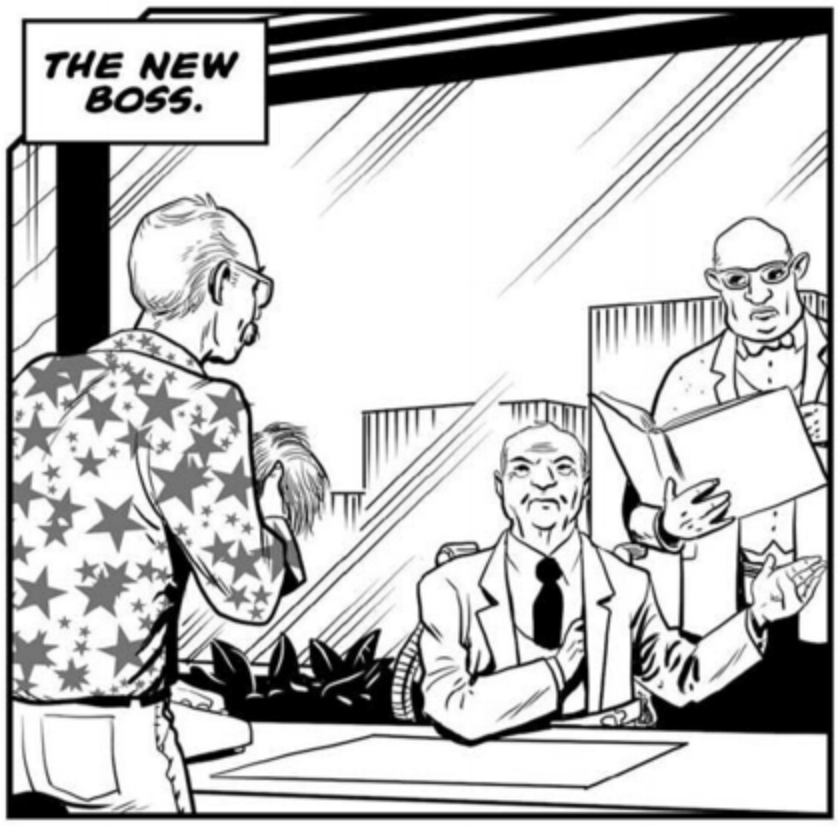
KING HELL

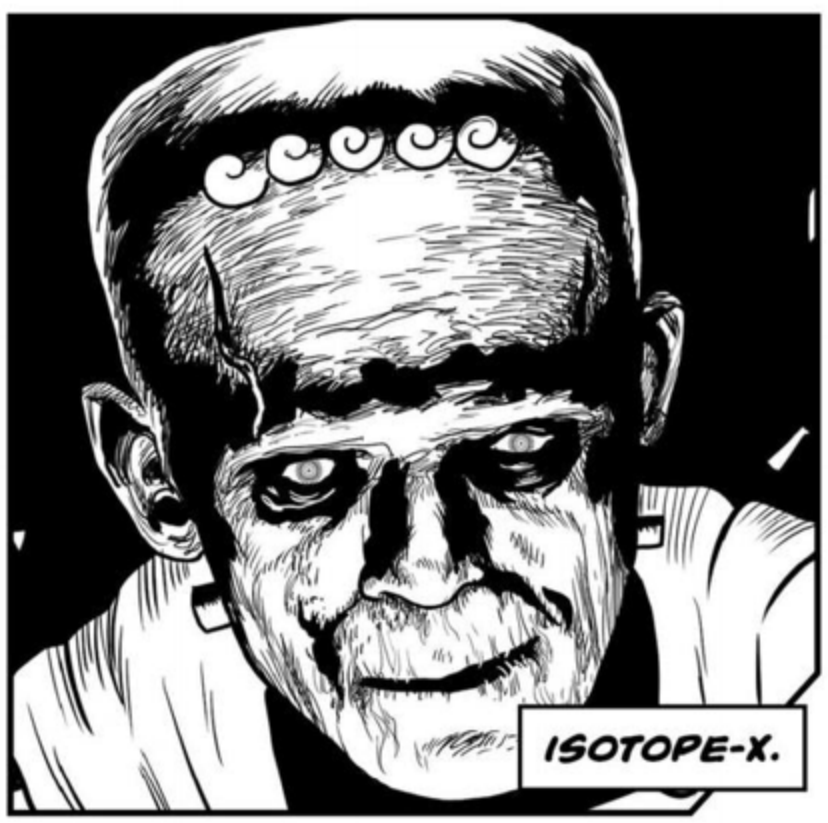
RICK VEITCH

NUMBER THREE

SUN COMICS

PREVIOUSLY IN TRUE-MAN THE MAXIMORTAL





TRUE-MAN THE MAXIMORTAL
Part Three

Continuing Volume 3 of
The King Hell Heroica

by Rick Veitch

Published by King Hell Press and Sun Comics
PO BOX 1371
West Townshend VT 05359
rarebit@sover.net
www.rickveitch.com

Find Rick Veitch on facebook

Thanks: Jay Babcock, Andy Kolovos,
Steve Conley, Kirby Veitch, Ken Viola

First Printing: February 2026
ISBN: 9798246280096
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SO, REBOZO OPENS THE TRUNK AND THERE'S THIS WOMAN, COMPLETELY BARE ASS, HOLDING A BOTTLE OF CHAMPAGNE!

AND SHE SAYS, "IF YOU WANT MY VOTE, MR. PRESIDENT, YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE TO EARN IT!"

HAHA! IF THAT DON'T SOUND LIKE BEBE!

WASHINGTON, DC
NOVEMBER 23, 1972

CODE RED, MR. PRESIDENT. YOU'RE NEEDED IN THE SITUATION ROOM.

DON'T RUN OFF YET, DICK! I WANNA HEAR IF SHE VOTED FOR YOU OR NOT!

IT'LL TO HAVE TO WAIT, ELVIS! THERE'S SOME SORT OF EMERGENCY.

HEY NOW.

WE AIN'T FIXIN' TO GO TOE-TO-TOE WITH THE RUSSKIES ARE WE?

PANACHE
IS IT THOSE GODDAMN VIETNAMESE AGAIN? HOW MANY TIMES DO WE HAVE TO BOMB 'EM BACK TO THE STONE AGE?
IT'S NOT THE WAR, SIR. IT'S THE TRUMAN PROJECT.
OUR MAIN FACILITY IN NEVADA HAS BEEN DESTROYED.
BRITISH AND SOVIET INTELLIGENCE ARE WORKING TOGETHER, THEY'VE HIT US HARD.
GOTTLIEB, ALL HIS RECORDS, EVERYTHING, UP IN SMOKE.
AND NO SIGN OF THE CREATURE.
WHERE'S PANACHE AND THE OVERSIGHT BOARD? THEY MUST HAVE A HANDLE ON THIS!
PRESTON PANANCHE IS CURRENTLY BEING TORTURED ON LIVE TV BY OPERATIVES CLAIMING TO REPRESENT THE SYMBIONESE LIBERATION ARMY.
MOST OF THE BOARD, INCLUDING HALDEMAN, WERE KILLED IN THE ATTACK.
CHRIST. WHAT AM I GOING TO TELL HIS WIFE?
SIR, OUR IMMEDIATE PROBLEM IS THE CREATURE.
ITS DESTRUCTIVE POWER IS INCALCULABLE. AND WE DON'T KNOW ITS CURRENT LOCATION OR INTENT.
AND ANYONE WHO KNOWS ANYTHING ABOUT THE PROJECT HAS BEEN TAKEN OUT! WE'RE FLYING BLIND!
WE BELIEVE ONE MEMBER OF THE OVERSIGHT BOARD SURVIVED, SIR.

SLUMBURG, PENNSYLVANIA
NOVEMBER 23, 1972

HEALTH INSURANCE?

WHAT DO YOU THINK THIS IS -- THE WELFARE DEPARTMENT?

MY KID NEEDS BRACES!

I GOT THE DIABETES.

IT'S BEEN SEVEN YEARS SINCE WE HAD A BUMP IN PAGE RATES!

HAVE A HEART, SID.

YOU CAN HAVE A HEARTY FUCK YOU. YOU'RE FIRED. ALL OF YA'.

AND DON'T EXPECT TO EVER WORK IN THIS TOWN AGAIN.

NOW GET YOUR INGRATE ASSES OUTTA HERE OR I'LL HAVE YA' THROWN OUT!

SID! THERE'S BEEN A TERRORIST ATTACK ON THE PANACHE BUILDING!

THE WHITE HOUSE IS ON THE LINE!

SID, THIS IS YOUR PRESIDENT.

I'M CALLING TO INFORM YOU THAT THE *TRUMAN PROJECT* HAS BEEN *DESTROYED* BY AMERICA'S ENEMIES.

EVERYONE ELSE IS DEAD, *SID.* YOU'RE OUR *LAST* HOPE.

THE *CREATURE* IS ON THE LOOSE AND WE NEED TO UNDERSTAND *WHAT* WE'RE DEALING WITH HERE.

WE KNOW *GOTTLIEB* WAS PRACTICING *MIND CONTROL* ON THE THING, BUT WE HAVE *NO* IDEA WHAT HIS *PARAMETERS* WERE.

I WASN'T DIRECTLY INVOLVED WITH ANY OF THAT *MKULTRA* STUFF.

BUT I SAT IN ON *MEETINGS* AND LISTENED TO A LOT OF *BULLSHIT* ABOUT IT.

GOTTLIEB HAD A *WRITERS' ROOM* DOWN THERE.

HE HAD 'EM DREAMIN' UP *STORIES* THEY BEAMED INTO THE THING'S *BRAIN* SOMEHOW.

THEY WERE TRYING TO *SHAPE* HIM WITH A *MORAL CODE* THEY TOOK FROM OLD *TRUE-MAN* COMICS.

YOU MUST HAVE WRITERS WHO CAN FOLLOW THAT TEMPLATE, *SID.* CAN THEY GIVE US ANY *INSIGHT* INTO HOW THIS CREATURE *THINKS?*

I JUST *FIRED* 'EM ALL.

BUT THERE'S *ONE* GUY.

VISITATION, CALIFORNIA
NOVEMBER 23, 1972

MY OLD HIGH SCHOOL BUDDY **DON**, WHO CALLS HIMSELF **CAPTAIN HEATBARF**, WAS STONED OUT OF HIS GOURD. SO I STUCK THE NEW ISSUE OF YOUR **HUNGER GODS** UNDER HIS NOSE.

AND HE GETS SO **WORKED UP** BYTHE WAY YOU DRAW THE CRACKLY ENERGY STUFF, HE BELLOWS OUT **"SUN ZOOM SPARK"!**

THAT'S KINDA **CATCHY.** NOT A BAD NAME FOR A **CHARACTER,** YOU KNOW?

A GUY LIKE THAT WOULD BE PACKIN' **FIREPOWER** STRAIGHT OUT OF THE CORE OF A **STAR.**

THAT'S **PLASMA,** Y'SEE? WHOLE DIFFERENT STATE OF MATTER.

I **LOVE** THE WAY YOUR MIND WORKS, **JACK.**

NOW TO **CONTROL** PLASMA YOU NEED **ELECTRO-MAGNETISM** AND LOTS OF IT.

SO **SUN ZOOM** HAS TO MAKE A **DEAL** WITH WHOEVER'S GOT A LOCK ON **THAT.**

MAYBE THE **BAD GUY.** JUST TO MAKE IT INTERESTIN'.

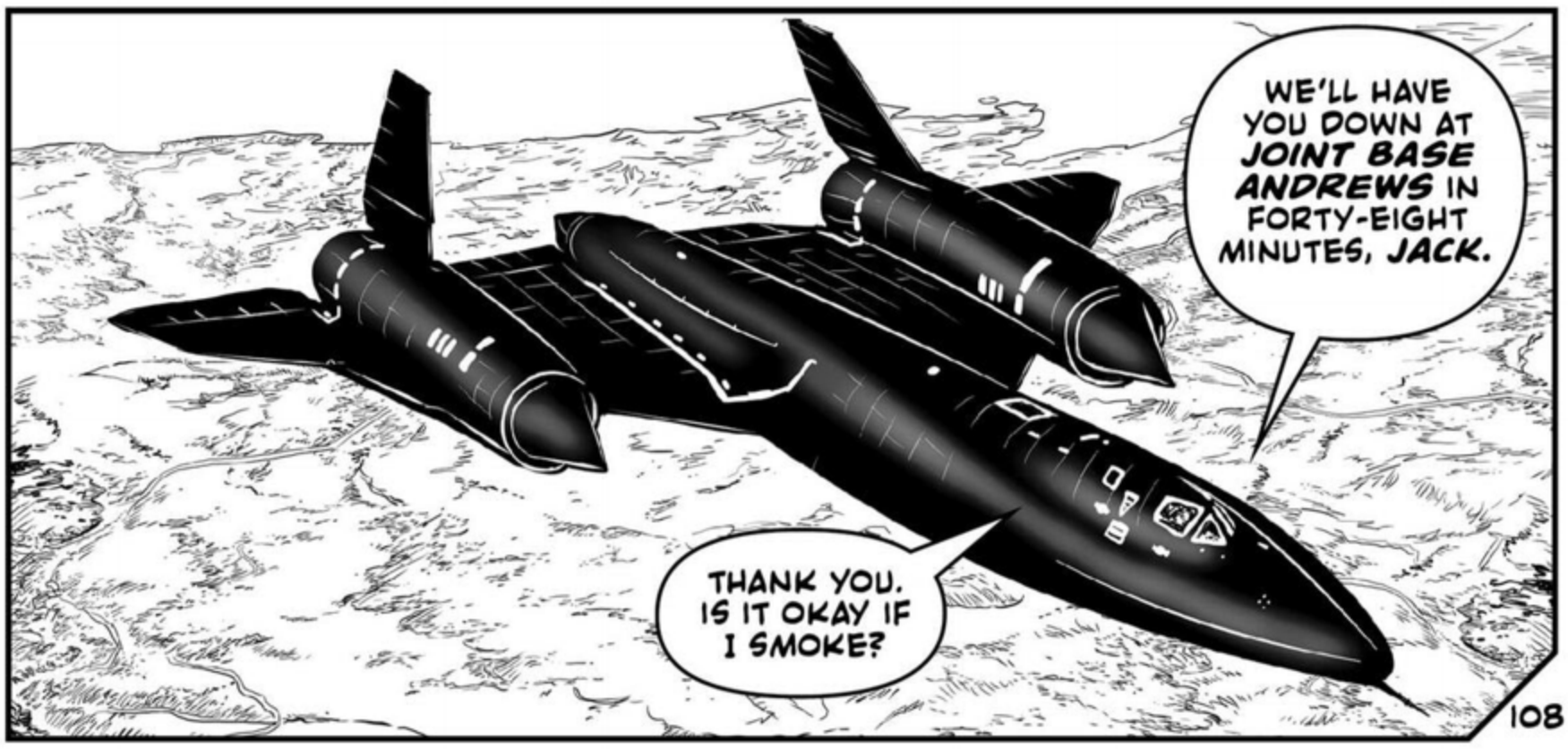
SORRY TO INTERRUPT BUT I GOTTA LAY SOME CABLE. OKAY IF I USE THE BIFFY?

HA!
OMNI

I CAN RELATE.
man's life
WEASELS RIPPED MY FLESH

HEY, ROSE. WHERE'D JACK TAKE OFF TO?
YOUR GUESS IS AS GOOD AS MINE.
ALL I KNOW IS A MILITARY ESCORT JUST SHOWED UP.

THEY SAID THEY NEEDED HIM FOR SOMETHING.
AND OF COURSE HE SAID "YES, SIR" AND OFF THEY WENT!
NOTHING SURPRISES ME ABOUT THAT GUY ANYMORE.


WE'LL HAVE YOU DOWN AT JOINT BASE ANDREWS IN FORTY-EIGHT MINUTES, JACK.
THANK YOU. IS IT OKAY IF I SMOKE?

SO WE GOT A *REAL SUPER SOLDIER?*

AND HE THINKS HE'S *TRUE-MAN?*

IT'S A LITTLE MORE *LAYERED* AND *COMPLEX* THAN IT APPEARS ON THE SURFACE, *JACK.*

WHAT WE HAVE, OR *HAD*, IS A *HIGHER DIMENSIONAL CREATURE* OF *UNIMAGINABLE POWER.*

WHO, OVER THE COURSE OF FIVE DECADES, WE HAVE ATTEMPTED TO FORGE INTO AN *INSTRUMENT* CAPABLE OF FURTHERING AMERICA'S *STRATEGIC GOALS.*

WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY *"FORGE"?*

EARLY ON THE CREATURE BECAME ENTHRALLED WITH THE SUPERHERO CHARACTER, *TRUE-MAN.* THIS LED US TO SUBJECTING IT TO EXTENSIVE *PSYCHOLOGICAL PROGRAMMING* BASED ON *OLD COMICS.*

AT THIS POINT WE'RE NOT SURE IF THE IMPRINTING HAS BEEN A *SUCCESS.*

SO YOU BEEN TRYNA' *CONTAIN* A *GOD.*

AND NOW HE'S *OUT* OF THE BOTTLE?

THIS THING IS CAPABLE OF OBLITERATING ***WHOLE CITIES*** AT WILL.

AND IT'S OUT THERE ON ITS OWN WITH ***NO*** CONTROL OVER WHEN OR HOW IT MIGHT ***UNLEASH*** THIS HELLISH POWER.

WE'VE GOT TO LOCATE IT AND TAKE IT DOWN BEFORE IT ***REMEMBERS*** WHAT WAS ***DONE*** TO IT.

AND ***WHO'S*** RESPONSIBLE.

I GET IT. YOU NEED TO PROTECT THE COUNTRY AND TO COVER YOURSELVES.

BUT YOU GOTTA UNDERSTAND -- A GUY WHO THINKS HE'S ***TRUE-MAN*** WON'T ATTACK ANYBODY.

NOT IF HE'S BEEN INSPIRED BY THE WORK OF ***JERRY SPIEGEL*** AND ***JOEL SCHUMACHER.***

I ***KNEW*** THOSE GUYS. THEY WANTED THEIR CHARACTER TO CHAMPION THE COMMON PEOPLE. THAT WAS THE ***FOUNDATION*** THEY BUILT HIM ON.

IF HE CAN, ***TRUE-MAN'S*** GOING TO SHOW UP WHEN THE PEOPLE ***NEED*** HIM.

WHEN HE ***DOES,*** YOU GUYS JUST NEED TO STICK TO THE ***SCRIPT.***

AND REINFORCE EVERYTHING HE ***STANDS*** FOR.

SO WHAT'S *NEXT* FOR HUNGER GODS, *JACK?*

BIG *CHANGES* COMIN', I THINK.

JACK! OH THANK GOD! I WAS GETTING WORRIED. *FRANK* LEFT HOURS AGO.

SORRY, *ROSE.* DUTY CALLED.

I KNOW. I KNOW. *ONCE* A RANGER *ALWAYS* A RANGER.

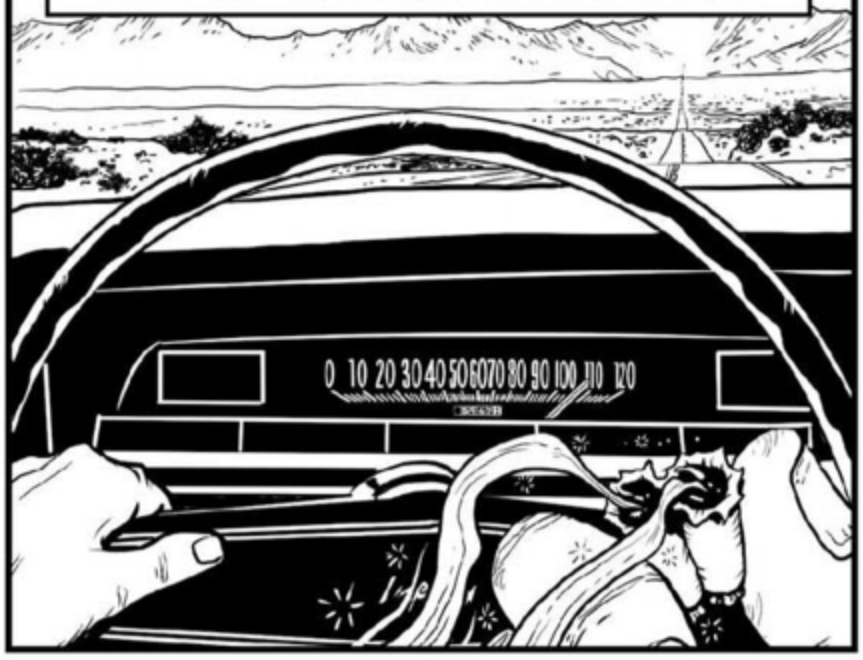
AND *WIVES* AREN'T SUPPOSED TO ASK *QUESTIONS.*

JUST *PLEASE* TELL ME YOU'RE *NOT* OUT THERE KILLING *NAZIS* AGAIN.

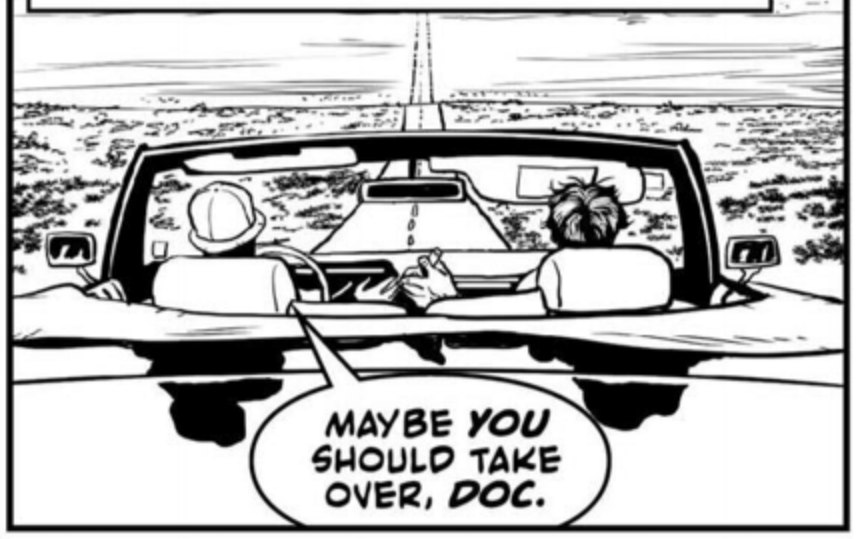
I WISH IT WAS THAT SIMPLE.

I'VE ALWAYS SAID THAT *AMYL NITRATE* AND A *BIG BLOCK CHEVY* GO TOGETHER LIKE *THE THREE STOOGES.*

THERE'S A TRICK, OF COURSE, TO INHALING *POPPERS* IN AN OPEN CAR WHILE SCREAMING ACROSS THE DESERT LIKE A *SCALDED BEE.*



I WAS DEMONSTRATING THE CORRECT TECHNIQUE TO MY *ACCOUNTANT* OVER A *FIFTH OF WILD TURKEY* JUST AS THE *700 MICS OF BLOTTER ACID* KICKED OPEN THE DOOR TO MY *FREUDIAN ID.*



DESERT ROCK, NEVADA
NOVEMBER 24, 1972

I DON'T THINK THEY'RE AFTER US, *DUKE*. SOMETHING *BIG* IS GOING ON OVER THAT RIDGE. EXPLOSION. FIRE.

LIKE MAYBE A CITY GOT NUKED?

WE CAN'T TAKE *ANY* CHANCES.

WE BETTER DIG INTO THE *LAUGHING GAS* AND *DMT* BEFORE THE FASCIST SWINE *CONFISCATE* IT.

DON'T GAMBLE with MARIJUANA

IN NEVADA: POSSESSION ! 20 YEARS!

IN A FIT OF *MAUI ZOWIE-INDUCED INSPIRATION*, OR MAYBE *PARANOIA*, MY ACCOUNTANT BOOTED THE *GREAT RED WHALE* OFF THE MAIN DRAG, BLASTING US INTO THE BARREN FOOTHILLS LIKE WE'D BEEN SHOT FROM A CANNON.

THE *DMT ENTITIES* CAME AND WENT, PROBABLY TERRIFIED BY THE SLINGSHOT EFFECT OF *DOC GONZO'S* DRIVING. BUT THE *NITROUS OXIDE*, TEMPERED BY A FEW *TUINALS*, REALLY GREASED UP THE MOOD.

WE WERE HITTING THAT EXQUISITE *MULTIPLE BUZZ* TERRITORY WHERE IT BECOMES DIFFICULT TO TELL WHAT'S *REALLY REAL*.

AND WHAT ISN'T.

HEY, CHIEF! YOU LOOK LIKE *OUR* KIND OF *HALLUCINATION.* NEED A LIFT?

I...

I...

I... I... *ISOTOPE-X!*

ISOTOPE-X, EH? SOUNDS LIKE IT HAS *POSSIBILITIES.*

WE'RE ALWAYS LOOKING TO *SCORE.*

GOT ANY?

ONLY YOU... CAN PREVENT *ISOTOPE-X.*

COULDN'T AGREE MORE, MY GOOD MAN!.

SINCE IT WAS ***IMPOSSIBLE*** TO DETERMINE IF HE WAS A FIGMENT OF OUR ***IMAGINATIONS,*** WE LET THE HITCHHIKER BLATHER AS THE ***IMPALA*** SLALOMED OUT OF THE HILLS AND INTO THE GREAT DESERT BASIN.

OOOOH, POKEY! ISOTOPE-X!

SHIT DAMN!

DO YOU SEE THEM ***THIS*** TIME?

OH YEAH.

POLLY WANT ***ISOTOPE-X!***

AND ***THEY*** SEE ***US.***

YOU EAT THE ***HASH.*** I KNOW HOW TO TALK TO THESE FREAKS.

WE'RE LOOKING FOR A GUY. MAYBE SIX THREE. BLONDE. MUSCULAR BUILD. DRESSED IN A SUPERHERO COSTUME. YOU BOYS SEEN ANYONE FITS THAT DESCRIPTION?

MP

WHY ***NO,*** DEAR FELLOW. WE'RE JUST SIMPLE HOLIDAY REVELERS ON OUR WAY TO SPREAD ***GOOD CHEER*** AT THE ***LOCAL ORPHANAGE!***

A LITTLE TOO MUCH ***EGGNOG,*** EH? GO ON THEN. GET THE HELL ***OUT*** OF HERE. THE WHOLE SECTOR'S IN LOCKDOWN.

ISOTO-HO-HO!

THANK YOU, OFFICER! AND GOD BLESS US EVERY ONE!

OUR RIDER KEPT ON CHANTING VARIATIONS ON THE *PERIODIC TABLE* AS WE ROARED OUT OF THE CHECK POINT LIKE A *B-17* ON A DRESDEN BOMBING RUN.

ISKATOPE-X! ARF ARF!

WE DIDN'T UNDERSTAND HIM, AND WE STILL WEREN'T SURE IF HE WAS A *FIGMENT*, SO WE CHIMED IN FULL *BEACH BOYS*, DOC GONZO TAKING *FALSETTO* AND ME PULLING *BASS*.

ISOTOPE-X!
ISOTOPE-X!
ISOTOPE-X!

BUT WITH THROATS DESICCATED AND THE *GREAT RED WHALE* RUNNING ON FUMES, IT WAS TIME TO SEEK OUT THE LAST TWO VESTIGES OF AMERICAN MASCULINITY: *98 OCTANE PREMIUM UNLEADED* AND *COLD BEER*.

ISOTOPE-X!

WANT ANYTHING?

GRAB ME A COUPLE SLIM JIMS.

ITHATOPE-XTH!

SCANNER'S SAYIN' THERE'S A BIG *EMERGENCY* AT THE *MILITARY BASE* BACK IN *DESERT ROCK*.

THEY GOT *ALL KINDS* OF *SECRET STUFF* OUT THERE.

GOLLY, THAT'S QUITE THE *COSTUME* YER FRIEND HAS ON. HOW DOES HE MAKE IT *CHANGE* LIKE THAT?

FOUR SCORE AND *ISOTOPE-X*.

SO HERE IT SAYS *ISOTOPE-X* HAS THE POWER TO MUTATE *TRUE-MAN* IN VARIOUS AND UNPREDICTABLE WAYS.

EVERYBODY KNOWS THAT.

TO RETURN TO NORMAL, SOMEONE HAS TO TRICK HIM INTO *SAYING HIS NAME BACKWARDS!*

TRUE MAN

USUALLY IT'S HIS GIRLFRIEND, *LIBBY PAYNE*. OR HIS SIDEKICK, *JACK CRICKET*.

IF I ONLY HAD A...

NAMEURT!

IT WAS PROBOBLY THE *ETHER*. A TANK OF THAT STUFF WILL TURN A MAN INTO A *SLOBBERING SPASTIC*.

RUMMAGING AROUND IN THE EMPTY BACK SEAT I FOUND THE LONG LOST VIAL OF *TOAD VENOM*.

AND WHETHER OUR HITCHHIKER HAD BEEN *REAL* OR *NOT* BECAME THE *LEAST* OF OUR WORRIES.

CAPRI, ITALY
NOVEMBER 23, 1972

LOOK AT THEM DANCING, *PHILLIP.*

IF IT WEREN'T FOR THIS DAMN *GOUT* I'D BE RIGHT DOWN THERE SHAKING MY *BOOTY* WITH THEM!

THEIR SPIRITS ARE SO MOVED BECAUSE TOMORROW THEY RECEIVE THEIR *ASSIGNMENT* ORDERS, *EMINENCE.*

THOSE AMONG THEM WHO PLAY THE *GAME* WILL BE CARING FOR THEIR FLOCKS IN GREAT *CATHEDRALS* AND *UNIVERSITIES.*

WHILE THOSE WHO *DON'T* WILL BE RELEGATED TO SOME POOR *BACKWATER PARISH* FOR THE REST OF THEIR MINISTRIES.

NOW YOU, *PHILLIP,* ARE A YOUNG INITIATE WHO UNDERSTANDS *WHY* CERTAIN THINGS NEED TO BE DONE AND *HOW* TO QUIETLY ACCOMPLISH THEM.

I SEE A *GREAT FUTURE* FOR YOU IN *MOTHER CHURCH,* DEAR BOY.

I'M HAPPY TO SERVE IN ANY WAY I CAN, *EMINENCE.*

THE RADIO TOWER JUST RECEIVED A CALL FROM THE *BADAMENTI* FAMILY.

DON GAETANO IS ON THE WAY HERE IN A LAUNCH. HE WISHES TO SEE YOU IN PERSON ABOUT AN ***URGENT MATTER.***

WELL, WELL, WELL.

AS YOU KNOW, ***DON GAETANO*** IS THE BOSS OF BOSSES IN THIS PART OF THE WORLD. WHAT YOU ***DON'T*** KNOW IS THAT HE'S TERRIFIED OF THE WATER.

IF HE'S COMING BY ***BOAT,*** SOMETHING VERY ***BIG*** IS BREWING.

PREPARE YOURSELF, ***PHILLIP.***

YOU'RE ABOUT TO BE THROWN INTO THE ***DEEP*** END OF THE POOL.

DON GAETANO, I'M SORRY I CAN'T RECEIVE YOU IN THE MANNER YOU DESERVE.

IT'S THE ***GOUT,*** I'M AFRAID.

NO, YOUR ***EMINENCE.*** IT IS ***I*** WHO INTRUDES ON YOUR CONVALESCENCE.

BUT WE HAVE HAD ***DISTURBING NEWS*** FROM THE FAMILIES IN ***AMERICA.***

THE ***MILITARY*** THERE HAS ***LOST CONTROL*** OF THE ***SUPERUOMO.***

THERE IS GREAT CONCERN THAT OUR *SHARED INTERESTS* WILL BE FACING NEW AND UNFORESEEN *DISRUPTIONS.*

WE ASK YOU TO INFORM THE *HOLY FATHER* SO HE TOO CAN PREPARE.

HE'LL FIND OUT SOON ENOUGH, *DON GAETANO.*

FIRST I MUST BRING THIS TO A *HIGHER POWER.*

WITH MY FOOT THE SIZE OF A SOCCER BALL, I'LL NEED *YOU* TO ATTEND ME, *PHILLIP.*

BE *WARNED.* WHAT YOU ARE ABOUT TO WITNESS WILL *CHALLENGE* YOUR FAITH.

EMINENCE, I ASSURE YOU *NOTHING* CAN *EVER* SHAKE MY BELIEF IN OUR LORD AND SAVIOR, JESUS CHRIST.

I'M NOT TALKING ABOUT FAITH IN *GOD,* PHILLIP.

I'M TALKING ABUT YOUR *SANITY.*

LIKE MOST EVERYONE ELSE, **PHILLIP,** YOU HAVE BEEN TAUGHT TO BELIEVE CERTAIN THINGS. ABOUT **HISTORY.** ABOUT **TECHNOLOGY.**

ABOUT WHO **REALLY** RUNS THE WORLD.

HAIL CAESAR!

HAIL CAESAR! THE **DOMINUS** WILL BE EXPECTING US.

EMINENCE. IS THIS SOME SORT OF **MOVIE SET?**

NO, **PHILLIP.**

IT IS A **LIVING TESTAMENT** TO THE BRILLIANCE OF THE MOST **RUTHLESS STRATEGIC PLANNERS** THE WORLD HAS EVER SEEN.

AND THE **INSTRUMENT** OF THE **GREATEST EMPIRE** THE WORLD HAS EVER KNOWN.

IT IS A *FACT* THAT EMPIRES *WITHER* AND *DIE* OVER TIME. AND THE *ROMANS* UNDERSTOOD THIS DYNAMIC.

THEY CHOSE INSTEAD TO GO *UNDERGROUND* BY CO-OPTING AN EMERGING *SPIRITUAL AWAKENING MOVEMENT.*

YOU MEAN, *CHRISTIANITY?*

YES. *HUMAN HISTORY* SINCE THE 3RD CENTURY HAS ESSENTIALLY BEEN *DICTATED* BY THE WILL OF THE *EMPEROR CONSTANTINE.*

WE ARE ABOUT TO BE GRACED WITH HIS PRESENCE.

I SEE A *MUMMY.* BUT...

IT'S A LITTLE *CRUDE* TO MODERN SENSIBILITIES BUT IN ITS TIME *MUMMIFICATION BY SORCERY* WAS CUTTING EDGE *LIFE EXTENSION* TECHNOLOGY.

DOMINUS NOSTER IMPERATOR CONSTANTINE! WE HUMBLY BEG AN AUDIENCE, GREAT CAESAR.

KKK KITCH!

WHAT DO YOU CRAVE *THIS* TIME, *SPELLCZEK?*

MY BANKERS HAVE JUST SECURED THE *OIL RESERVES* OF *TRIPOLITANIA,* SO MY *MOOD* IS ONE OF BENEVOLENCE.

NOT A BOON, *DOMINUS.* I CARRY URGENT NEWS OF THE *GOD MAN.*

HE HAS *ESCAPED* CAPTIVITY BEFORE HIS *INDOCTRINATION* WAS *COMPLETED.*

THERE IS CONCERN HIS GREAT POWER WILL POSE A *THREAT* TO YOUR *OWN,* AUGUST ONE.

I DO NOT FEAR THIS GOD MAN, *SPELLCZEK.*

HIS *TRUE* ROLE, AS *LIVING SYMBOL* OF THE *CORE DIVINITY* OF MAN, HAS ALREADY BEEN *USURPED.*

THE *MASSES* WILL NEVER KNOW THE *TRUTH* OF HIM.

THEY WILL ONLY SEE THE *NAME* AND *IMAGE* WE HAVE *BRANDED* HIM WITH.

WHEN THE TIME COMES WE'LL HAVE AN *EFFIGY* OF HIS *TORTURED BODY* HANGING IN EVERY HOME IN THE EMPIRE!

JUST LIKE WE DID THE *LAST ONE!*

THIS MIGHT TAKE A LITTLE WHILE TO PROCESS, *PHILLIP.*

BUT YOU'RE GOING TO BE *ALL RIGHT.*

FOR GOD'S SAKE, *PHILLIP.* IT'S BEEN THREE DAYS. *PLEASE* TALK TO ME.

MOTHER CHURCH NEEDS TO KNOW WHETHER YOU'RE A *TEAM PLAYER* OR *NOT.*

DUNN

IT'S *YOUR* CHOICE, *PHILLIP.*

Reverend Phillip Dunn

Reassignment Notice

Reverend Phillip Dunn is hereby reassigned as Assistant Vicar to Saint Bingham's Parrish Slumburg, PA.

SLUMBURG, PENNSYLVANIA
MAY 20, 1974

IF I HAVE TO DO ONE MORE OF THESE THINGS I'M GOING TO BLOW MY FUCKING BRAINS OUT.

WHAT HAPPENED TO THE CUSHY GIG AT PLAYJOINT MAGAZINE?

SLUMBURG FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION CONVENTION

GUESTS:
PHILIP K DICK
ROBERT ANTON WILSON

I WAS PULLING DOWN A GRAND A WEEK GHOSTING MALCOLM'S "PLAYJOINT PHILOSOPHY" COLUMN. GOT TO HANG OUT AT THE MANSION.

AND I WAS GETTING SOOO MUCH PUSSY. BUT YOU DON'T WANT TO HEAR ABOUT THAT.

I WANT TO HEAR EVERYTHING.

THE ONE YOU NEED TO HEAR ABOUT IS THIS SHOWGAL I WAS TAPPING IN VEGAS.

SHE'D BEEN DATING SOME COLONEL WHO WORKED AT AREA 51. SAID THEY DROPPED ACID ONE TIME AND HE GOT TO TALKING.

ABOUT A SUPER SECRET PROGRAM THE FEDS HAD GOING OUT THERE.

HE CLAIMED THEY HAD CAPTURED A *HIGHER DIMENSIONAL BEING*. AND THEY WERE TRYING TO *WEAPONIZE* IT.

THEY HAD IT UNDER DEEP PSYCHE *PROGRAMMING* WHICH, I KID YOU NOT, THEY WERE BASING ON OLD *SUPER HERO COMICS*.

BUT IT WAS *WORKING*. AT LEAST UNTIL THE THING *ESCAPED*.

NOW THEY GOT SOME *SUPER POWERED CREATURE* OUT THERE WHO'S BRAINWASHED INTO BELIEVING HE'S *TRUE-MAN*.

IT'S BEEN *TWO YEARS* AND HE HASN'T TURNED UP.

WHOA!

SYNCHRONICITY STRIKES AGAIN!

BACK IN FEBRUARY I HAD THE MOST BIZARRE *PSYCHOSPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE* OF MY LIFE.

AND IT INVOLVED *TRUE-MAN!*

I WAS IN PAIN FROM HAVING MY *WISDOM TEETH* REMOVED SO I'D ORDERED *DARVON* FROM THE LOCAL PHARMACY.

THE DELIVERY GIRL HAD A *SHINY PLASTIC TRUE-MAN LOGO* HANGING AROUND HER NECK.

THERE WAS THIS INCREDIBLE MOMENT WHEN THE *SUNLIGHT* GLINTED OFF IT LIKE IT WAS *ALIVE*. MY WHOLE *REALITY SHIFTED*.

I SPIRALED THROUGH LAYERS OF POSSIBLE INCARNATIONS UNTIL I LANDED IN *THIRD CENTURY ROME*, SPEAKING TO A *WOMAN* I KNEW WELL.

WE WERE BOTH MEMBERS OF A *CHRISTIAN SECT* UNDER THE *SIGN OF THE FISH*.

SHE WAS *AFRAID* FOR THE FISH.

THE *EMPEROR* HAS PROFESSED TO *CHRISTIANITY* AND DECREED THE *CROSS* WILL *REPLACE* THE FISH AS THE *SYMBOL OF CHRIST*.

IN THIS MANNER THE *REAL TEACHINGS* ARE *PERVERTED* AND *OBSCURED*.

I THINK WE'VE ENTERED *CHAPEL PERILOUS*, PHIL. WHICH IS RIGHT WHERE THE *ILLUMINATI* WANTS US.

ANYONE WHO DOESN'T THINK WE ARE *CONTROLLED* BY A CLOSELY KNIT GROUP OF NEAR *OMNIPOTENT* PEOPLE HASN'T BEEN PAYING *ATTENTION*.

IT'S THE *BLACK IRON PRISON*. A TRANS-TEMPORAL SYSTEM FOR *SOCIAL CONTROL* AND *SPIRITUAL ENTRAPMENT*.

IT'S GOT US IN A *MAZE* WHERE THE WALLS ARE MANIFESTATIONS OF ALL THAT'S *IRRATIONAL, CRUEL* AND *MECHANICAL*.

IN A WORLD OF *HIDDEN POWER STRUCTURES,* PARANOIA CAN BE A *HEIGHTENED FORM* OF *AWARENESS.*

JUST BECAUSE WE'RE PARANOID *DOESN'T* MEAN WE AREN'T *RIGHT.*

HAHA! WE MAY BE CRAZY, BUT IT SELLS A *SHITLOAD* OF BOOKS!

IT SURE DOES! *TO PARANOIA!*

SPECIAL BULLETIN

BARKEEP. WHAT'S ON THE TUBE?

THE SIXTH STREET BRIDGE COLLAPSED! LOOKS *BAD.*

HOWARD, EMERGENCY CREWS ARE SAYING *MANY* PEOPLE ARE *TRAPPED* AND *MORE* OF THE STRUCTURE COULD COME DOWN AT *ANY MOMENT.*

INCREDIBLY THERE ARE REPORTS OF A *MAN FLYING* DOWN FROM THE SKY AND *ENTERING* THE WRECKAGE!

WITNESSES DESCRIBE HIM AS DRESSED IN THE COSTUME OF THE POPULAR COMIC BOOK CHARACTER, *TRUE-MAN!*

PBBLLTCH!

SPLUUUTCH!

I NEVER SHOULD HAVE TAKEN THIS ROLE.

YOU? WHAT ABOUT ME?

KRAOW!

I HAD A SPAGHETTI WESTERN LINED UP! WITH HENRY FONDA!

BUT MY AGENT SAID I WAS PERFECT FOR THE PART.

THAT I WAS THE SPITTING IMAGE OF THE CHARACTER FROM THE COMICS AND THEY REALLY WANTED ME.

THIS CRISIS ACTOR THING IS JUST SO FUCKED UP!

SKREEECH!

I DON'T MIND DOING THE STUNTS BUT I JUST WISH WE'D HAD MORE TIME TO REHEARSE!

AND A REAL SCRIPT!

IT'S ALL SO LOOSEY GOOSEY. I MEAN WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO DO...?

SLUMBURG, PENNSYLVANIA
MAY 20, 1974

...SEDUCE THIS GUY?

PRESS

JUST BECAUSE I'M *YOUNG* AND GOT THE *BODY*, DOESN'T MEAN I CAN'T PLAY *SERIOUS ROLES*.

I STUDIED WITH *LEE STRASBERG* FOR GOD'S SAKE.

THIS WAY.

I'M GOING TO TALK WITH MY *AGENT*.

I ALREADY TALKED TO *MINE*. I TOLD HIM I'M *WASTED* ON THESE *ONE-DIMENSIONAL* PARTS.

THIS WAY.

WE SHOULD DEFINITELY BE GETTING *HAZARD PAY.*

SHH! THERE'S *VOICES* UP AHEAD.

I THINK THIS IS *IT!*

DO I *LOOK* ALL RIGHT?

LIKE A *BAG LADY* WITH *LEPROSY.*

I WOULDN'T BELIEVE IT *EITHER,* CHIEF.

BUT I'M *SEEING* IT WITH MY *OWN* TWO EYES.

THE GUY'S HOLDING UP THE *WHOLE PIER!*

TELL THEM TO *HURRY,* CAPTAIN. I'M NOT SURE HOW *LONG* I CAN KEEP IT *STABILIZED.*

BREAK A LEG.

KREEK!

POP!

WHAT THE...?

LIBBY PAYNE AND JACK CRICKET FROM WSLM NEWS! WE'D LIKE TO ASK YOU A FEW QUESTIONS!

WHO ARE YOU? WHERE DO YOU COME FROM? WHY DO YOU DRESS IN A TRUE-MAN COSTUME?

KRINK

I'M SORRY, MISS PAYNE. BUT NOW IS NOT A GOOD TIME.

I MUST ASK YOU TO LEAVE FOR YOUR OWN SAFETY.

BUT PEOPLE HAVE THE RIGHT TO KNOW!

THE PEOPLE I'M CONCERNED ABOUT AT THE MOMENT ARE ABOVE US, TRAPPED IN A DANGLING TRAIN CAR.

TOK!

SWAP!

HOW DOES IT FEEL TO HOLD THE FATE OF SO MANY LIVES IN YOUR HANDS?

IT FEELS LIKE THE RIGHT THING TO DO!

THE WRECKAGE IS SHIFTING. I INSIST YOU HEAD FOR SAFETY IMMEDIATELY!

OH MY GOD!

KANG!

BANG!

GENK!

IT'S BREAKING *LOOSE!* YOU'VE *GOT* TO GET OUT OF HERE *NOW!*

WE'RE GOING! *WE'RE GOING!*

VZVZ

I'LL TRY TO BUY YOU SOME TIME BY *WELDING* A FEW GIRDERS TOGETHER WITH MY *INFRA-VISION!*

NO GOOD! THE SHIFTING WEIGHT IS *TOO MUCH!* THE WHOLE THING'S COMING *DOWN!*

SHREEEK!

HANG ON!

TRASHHDANG!

I'VE GOT YOU!

DID EVERYONE GET OUT *SAFELY,* CAPTAIN?

WE EVACUATED THEM ALL *JUST IN TIME!*

THANKS TO *YOU, TRUE-MAN!*

IS THAT WHAT WE CALL YOU? *TRUE-MAN?*

ISN'T IT OBVIOUS, *MISS PAYNE?*

HOW ABOUT YOU, YOUNG *JACK?* ARE YOU OKAY?

KOFKOF JUST GOT A LUNGFUL OF SMOKE, *TRUE-MAN!*

WE SURE COULD USE A FELLOW LIKE YOU IN THE DEPARTMENT, *TRUE-MAN.*

I'M NOT A *JOINER,* CHIEF. BUT REST ASSURED I'LL BE HERE WHEN YOU *NEED* ME.

AS FOR YOU, *MISS PAYNE,* I HOPE YOU'VE LEARNED YOUR *LESSON.*

ACTUALLY, I THINK I'M GOING TO NEED SOME *ADVANCED TUTORING.*

SAY OVER DINNER? TONIGHT? MY PLACE?

I MAKE A MEAN TACO!

I'M *SURE* YOU DO, *MISS PAYNE.*

SOME *OTHER* TIME, PERHAPS.

HOW ABOUT THE *CAMERA?*

DROPPED IT UNDER THE *PILE* ON OUR WAY OUT.

WE GOT *KILLER FOOTAGE.* IF IT *SURVIVED.*

THIS WAY.

HERE'S MY TWO *STARS!*

SO HOW DID *OPENING NIGHT* GO?

WE WEREN'T *PREPARED,* SID. NO ONE *COULD* BE.

THEN IT WAS *REALLY HIM* THIS TIME?

YES! YOU FEEL LIKE AN *AMOEBA* STANDING NEXT TO HIM. AND THERE'S A LOW *HUM* I COULD HEAR COMING FROM HIS CHEST.

HE COMES ACROSS KIND OF *OLD-FASHIONED.* LIKE HE HAS A STRONG CODE OF *ETHICS.*

THAT'S WHAT WE WERE *HOPING.*

THE WEIRD THING IS WHEN I TOUCHED HIS *COSTUME,* IT FELT WARM AND *CREEPY CRAWLY.* LIKE IT WAS *ALIVE.*

YOU BETTER GET *USED* TO *THAT, PRINCESS.*

I'VE BEEN THINKING, *SID.*

MAYBE I'M NOT CUT OUT FOR *CRISIS ACTING.* I'M BETTER SUITED TO *DRAMATIC ROLES.*

ME *TOO,* SID. I'M NO GOOD AT THIS *IMPROV* STUFF. I NEED A *SCRIPT* TO REALLY *SHINE.*

WHAT I *REALLY* WANT TO DO IS *FILMS.*

FUGGEDABOUDIT. THE GOVERNMENT SPENT TWELVE BILLION DOLLARS BRAINWASHING THIS BIRD TO BELIEVE HE HAS TWO FRIENDS. *LIBBY PAYNE* AND *JACK CRICKET.*

NOW THAT HE'S *SEEN* YA', THERE'S *NO* BACKIN' OUT.

I'M SURE SOMETHING CAN BE DONE. I'M GOING TO HAVE A WORD WITH MY *AGENT.*

YEAH. I NEED TO DISCUSS THIS WITH *MINE* TOO.

I *OWN* YOUR AGENTS.

SITWELL, EXPLAIN TO MY TWO PRIMADONNAS WHY *NOTHIN'* CAN BE DONE.

THE CREATURE WAS SUBJECTED TO EXTENSIVE PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPRINTING CONCERNING YOUR TWO CHARACTERS.

NOW THAT HE'S SEEN YOU IN THE ROLES HE'S FORMED AN *IRREVERSIBLE BOND* TO YOU.

IF YOU TRY TO DISAPPEAR HE WILL NOT *ACCEPT* IT AND SIMPLY *HUNT* YOU DOWN.

AT WHICH POINT HE *MIGHT* LOSE THE CHEESE FROM HIS CRACKER AND TEAR YA LIMB FROM LIMB.

CAPEESH?

FUCK YOU, YOU FUCKING DICKLESS PIECE OF FUCKING SHIT!

ALL I WANTED WAS TO BE *UP* ON THE *SCREEN!*

I HAD A MOVIE WITH HENRY FUCKING FONDA FOR FUCK'S SAKE!

ALL I WANTED WAS TO BE A ***STAR!***

YOU SURE HAVE A ***WAY*** WITH CREATIVE TYPES, ***SID.***

YOU CAN'T GIVE 'EM AN ***INCH,*** SITWELL. REMEMBER THAT AFTER I'M ***GONE.***

WHAT'S ON THE SCHEDULE?

CARDIOLOGIST AT NINE. CHEMO AT ELEVEN. ONCOLOGIST AT ONE. AND THEN ENDOCRINOLOGY AT THREE.

NOT THAT ***ANY*** OF 'EM ARE DOIN' ME MUCH ***GOOD.***

I WANT YOU TO CHECK ***THESE GUYS*** OUT.

WHY DIE?

REVOLUTIONARY LIFE EXTENSION TECHNOLOGY NOW AVAILABLE!

THE METHUSELAH INSTITUTE OFFERS HOPE TO THE TERMINALLY ILL PATIENT.

SEE IF THEY'RE ***LEGIT.***

NEW YORK, NEW YORK
JUNE 4, 1974

CBC WORLD OF SPORT

GOOD EVENING!

IT WAS TWO WEEKS AGO THAT THE WORLD WAS SHOCKED BY FOOTAGE OF A MAN FLYING IN THE SOOTY SKIES OF SLUMBURG, PENNSYLAVANIA!

DRESSED IN THE COLORFUL CAPE AND TIGHTS OF THE COMIC BOOK SUPERHERO TRUE-MAN, HE HAS SINCE PERFORMED A SERIES OF DARING RESCUES!

CAPABLE OF INCREDIBLE FEATS OF STRENGTH, HE APPEARS UNBIDDEN WHEN UNEXPECTED DANGER STRIKES.

THOUGH LITTLE IS KNOWN ABOUT THIS TRUE-MAN, MANY PEOPLE ARE PROCLAIMING HIM A CHAMPION OF SORTS!

I'M HOWARD COSELL AND WITH ME TONIGHT IS A GENTLEMAN WHO KNOWS A FEW THINGS ABOUT BEING A CHAMPION.

THE CURRENT REIGNING AND TWICE-CROWNED HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION OF THE WORLD, MUHAMMAD ALI.

THANK YOU FOR COMING IN TO SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS ON THIS FASCINATING SUBJECT, MUHAMMAD.

THANK YOU, HOWARD. I GOT TO SAY I LIKE THE WAY THIS TRUE-MAN FELLA IS HELPING FOLKS IN NEED.

THEN I NOTICE HE AIN'T ***BLACK.***

BUT THEN, NEITHER IS ***SANTY CLAUS*** OR ***BABY JESUS.*** OR SO THEY BEEN ***TELLIN'*** US.

MOCKY MOUSE, NOW ***HE*** BE BLACK. BUT HE ***ALSO*** BE A ***RODENT.***

THAT'S HOW IT ALWAYS SEEMS TO ***GO*** FOR US, YOU KNOW, ***HOWARD?***

I AGREE WITH YOU, CHAMP. TOO MANY ***RACIAL ISSUES*** HAVE GONE UNRESOLVED FOR TOO MANY YEARS.

BUT WE'RE HERE TO DISCUSS WHAT PEOPLE ARE ALREADY CALLING ***TRUE-MANIA.*** A KIND OF CULTURAL FRENZY UNLIKE ***ANY*** WE'VE PREVIOUSLY SEEN IN THIS COUNTRY.

I SEE IT TOO! THEY SAYIN' HE WAS BORN ON A SPEEDING COMET, JUST LIKE IN THE ***FUNNY BOOKS.***

AND BROUGHT UP AS AN ORPHAN CHILD JUST LIKE ***MOSES*** IN THE ***BIBLE.***

BUT IT GETS ***WORSE.***

THERE'S WHITE FOLKS, ***PRIESTS*** AND ***BISHOPS*** EVEN, SAYIN' HE MAY BE THE ***SECOND COMIN'.***

I CAN ***GUARANTEE*** YOU WON'T HEAR ***NOBODY*** PREACHIN' ***THAT*** IN THE ***BLACK*** MOSQUES AND CHURCHES.

WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THE ***GOVERNMENT'S*** RESPONSE? ***PRESIDENT NIXON*** WAS ALL SMILES WHEN HE ADDRESSED THE NATION.

HITLER HAD GUYS LIKE THIS. ALL ***BLONDE*** AND ***BLUE-EYED*** HEROES OF THE FATHERLAND ***GOOSE STEPPIN'*** AROUND.

MAYBE THAT'S WHY HE SMILIN'?

AND LISTEN TO ***THIS.*** I GO INTO THE ***TOY STORE*** TO BUY A PRESENT FOR MY LITTLE GIRL. NOT ***TWO DAYS*** AFTER ***TRUE-MAN*** ARRIVED ON THE SCENE.

AND THEY GOT THE SHELVES STACKED SKY HIGH WITH NOTHIN' BUT ***TRUE-MAN*** STUFF.

HOW THEY KNOW TO ***DO*** THAT, ***HOWARD?***

THE INTRICACIES OF LICENSED TOY MANUFACTURING AND DISTRIBUTION ARE BEYOND ME.

BUT WHAT ABOUT ***MUHAMMAD ALI,*** TWICE-CROWNED CHAMPION OF THE WORLD. HOW DOES THE APPEARANCE OF A SUPERHUMAN IMPACT ***YOU?***

I TALK TO ***JOE FRAZIER. FOREMAN. KEN NORTON.*** WE ALL LOOKIN' AT THIS GUY WHO CAN MOP THE FLOOR WITH ***ANY*** OF US.

WE ALL THINKIN' THE ***SAME*** THING.

WITH ***TRUE-MAN*** AROUND, AIN'T ***NOBODY*** GONNA WANT TO PAY TO SEE ***US*** FIGHT.

SO ***WHY*** WE BE RISKING OUR LIVES IN THE RING?

I MEAN WHAT'S THE ***POINT,*** HOWARD?

I ***DON'T*** HAVE AN ANSWER FOR YOU, CHAMP. BUT IT'S A ***QUESTION*** I'LL BE ASKING OLYMPIC GOLD MEDALIST ***MARK SPUTZ.***

COMING UP NEXT ON THE ***WILD WORLD OF SPORTS!***

CAMP DAVID, MARYLAND
AUGUST 12, 1974

SO WHO'S THIS GUY COMING IN?

SIDNEY WALLACE. HE'S BEEN RUNNING THE TRUMAN PROJECT SINCE THEY GOT PANACHE.

DOCTORS SAY HE'S GOT A COUPLE WEEKS TO LIVE.

SO HE'S HERE TO HAND THE PROJECT OFF TO US.

THE TIMING COULDN'T BE BETTER.

AFTER THE ATTACK, WALLACE SET UP A CRISIS ACTOR PROGRAM OPERATING BEHIND THE SCENES.

BECAUSE OF HIM WE HAVE A PLAN IN PLACE THAT'S WORKING.

BUT IT'S TIME FOR A CHANGING OF THE GUARD.

DO I REALLY NEED TO SPEND *TIME* ON THIS GUY?

IT WILL HELP THINGS GO *SMOOTH.*

I'LL TAKE CARE OF THE *BUSINESS.*

YOU COME IN AT THE *END* AND *PAT* HIM ON THE HEAD.

WHITE HOUSE CHIEF OF STAFF *DICK CHENEY* REPORTING FOR DUTY.

PERMISSION TO COME ABOARD, CAP'N?

CHENEY? I DRIVE ALL THE WAY OUT HERE ON *LIFE SUPPORT* AND THAT KLUTZ *FORD* DOESN'T HAVE TIME TO *SEE* ME?

DOES HE EVEN *KNOW* I *SAVED* EVERY ONE OF YOUR ASSES AFTER THE *HIT?*

DOES HE *CARE?*

THE PRESIDENT CURRENTLY HAS A LARGE GREASY *TURD* ON HIS PLATE WITH THE *NIXON PARDON.*

HE SHOULD BE HERE SHORTLY. I'LL LET *HIM* CONVEY HOW *GRATEFUL* WE ARE.

BUT THIS GIVES ME A CHANCE TO TELL YOU THAT I'VE BEEN GOING THROUGH YOUR *FILE,* SID.

AND I GOTTA SAY...

I'M A *REAL* FAN.

SO I NEED YOU TO GET ME UP TO SPEED ON ***CURRENT STRATEGY.*** HOW ARE WE MAINTAINING ***CONTROL*** OF THIS THING, ***SID?***

BASICALLY WE ***KEEP HAMMERIN'*** ON THE VALUES ***MKULTRA*** WAS TRYING TO ***BUILD INTO*** HIM BEFORE THEY GOT CUT SHORT.

SURROUND HIM WITH ***PRE-PROGRAMMED FRIENDS.*** KEEP HIM BUSY WITH ***DISASTERS*** AND ***COSTUMED CRIMINALS.***

CONTAINMENT IN ***SLUMBURG.*** BRILLIANT. ***HENRY*** WANTS TO USE HIM IN ***FOREIGN POLICY.***

NAH. IT'S TOO EARLY. ***GOTTLIEB*** ALWAYS SAID IF HIS MIND CONTROL PROGRAM WENT ***UNFINISHED*** THEN ***ALL HELL*** COULD BREAK LOOSE.

THIS THING NEEDS ***TWO,*** MAYBE ***THREE MORE*** YEARS BEFORE HE'S FULLY BAKED.

WE BOW TO THE ***EXPERT!*** YOU'VE BEEN PART OF THIS THING SINCE IT FIRST APPEARED IN 1918!

YEAH. I KNEW I WAS ONTO SOMETHING ***REALLY BIG*** THE FIRST TIME I SAW IT.

AND WHEN IT CAME BACK I WAS ***READY*** WITH TONS OF ***MERCHANDISE*** IN THE PIPELINE. I MADE A ***KILLING.***

WE ***NOTICED*** THAT. ***GOOD*** FOR YOU.

BUT WHAT ABOUT THESE ***CRISIS ACTORS?*** CAN WE ***DEPEND*** ON THEM?

THEY'RE ***PROS.*** BUT ***ARTSY-FARTSY*** TYPES, YOU KNOW?

YOU GOTTA KEEP 'EM UNDER YOUR ***THUMB.***

THEY'RE GONNA *COME* AT YA', ALWAYS WANTIN' *MORE, MORE, MORE!*

Y'GOTTA' *TELL* 'EM!

NOT.

ANOTHER.

NICKLE!

KOFKOF KAWWF!

HE'S GOING INTO *CARDIAC ARREST.*

IT'S *NOW* OR *NEVER,* MISTER *SITWELL.*

MISTER *CHENEY,* I MUST ASK YOU TO MAKE YOUR EXIT *IMMEDIATELY!*

PLEASE *HURRY.* THAT'S IT. THANK YOU.

I'M *OUT* OF HERE! ANYTHING WE CAN *DO,* JUST *SAY* THE WORD!

WHAT HAPPENED TO *SIDNEY WALLACE?*

SIDNEY SLEEPS WITH THE FISHES, *MISTER PRESIDENT.*

WHICH PUTS THE *TRUMAN PROJECT* BACK IN *OUR* HANDS AND AT *YOUR* DISPOSAL.

HENRY WILL BE DELIGHTED.

WE DIDN'T HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH THE *TIMING* OF *SID'S* FINAL ILLNESS, DID WE, *DICK?*

IF WE DID, *MISTER PRESIDENT?*

YOU *WOULDN'T* WANT TO KNOW.

SLUMBURG, PENNSYLVANIA
SEPTEMBER 2, 1974

MY AGENT STOPPED RETURNING MY CALLS.

NOW I THINK MY PHONE IS TAPPED.

THERE ARE PEOPLE WATCHING MY APARTMENT. I CAN'T EVEN HAVE A FRIEND OVER.

I'M HAVING NIGHTMARES. THE PILLS THEY GAVE ME AREN'T WORKING.

AT LEAST TODAY WE FINALLY MEET THE SECRET IDENTITY.

JACK CRICKET'S ALL BOYISH ENTHUSIASM. WHILE LIBBY PAYNE TREATS HIM LIKE A PATHETIC CREEP.

SHOULDN'T BE TOO DIFFICULT TO STAGE.

THEY TOLD ME IT'S SOME SORT OF MATING RITUAL KINK HE'S INTO.

FIVE MINUTES.

THIS ROLE IS JUST GETTING CRAZIER AND CRAZIER!

THE *CHARGES* GO OFF IN FIFTEEN MINUTES. *PEARLY* WILL GET A *PHONE CALL.*

THEN YOU TWO HEAD DOWNSTAIRS WHERE THE *MUSTANG* WILL BE WAITING.

GOT IT!

THIS WAY.

WHEN HE SHOWS UP AT THE *REFINERY* MAKE SURE HE *SEES* BOTH OF YOU!

GOT IT!

THIS WAY.

AND WHEN HE SEES US?

I GUESS WE *WING IT.*

LIKE WE *ALWAYS* DO.

TITS *OUT.*

GET *IN* HERE, YOU TWO! I WANT TO INTRODUCE OUR NEWEST HIRE, *WESLEY WINSTON.*

WINSTON, MEET *WSLM'S* STAR REPORTER, *LIBBY PAYNE* AND OUR OFFICE GOFER, *JACK CRICKET.*

WELCOME TO THE MONKEY HOUSE, *MISTER WINSTON.*

PLEASED TO **KOFKOF!** MEET YOU.

SO DID YOU CATCH PNEUMONIA RIDING IN ON THE TURNIP TRUCK, *WINSTON?*

ACTUALLY, **WHEEZE** I'M FROM CORN COUNTRY, *MISS PAYNE.*

STILL **KOF** GETTING USED TO BIG CITY *POLLUTION,* I'M AFRAID.

I'M ASSIGNING WINSTON TO THE *TRUE-MAN* BEAT.

THAT'S *MY* STORY, *PEARLY!* I'M THE ONE WHO BROKE IT WIDE OPEN!

I'LL BE HANDLING SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIAL. **WHEEZE** LOCAL COLOR AND BACKGROUND IN THE *COMICS.*

I *WON'T* BE STEPPING ON YOUR **KOF** TOES, *MISS PAYNE.*

YOU BETTER NOT *SNEEZE* ON ME EITHER, *RUBE.* I DON'T WANT TO CATCH ONE OF THOSE DOGPATCH DISEASES.

IT'S JUST MY DARN ASTHMA. **KOF** BUT I'LL BE *CAREFUL,* MISS PAYNE.

WHAT'S *THAT?* AN *EXPLOSION?*

GREAT NIETZSCHE'S GHOST! THE *REFINERY'S* ON FIRE.

HOLY GUACAMOLE! THERE'S ENOUGH *HIGH-OCTANE FUEL* STORED DOWN THERE TO BLOW *SLUMBURG* INTO *ORBIT!*

UNLESS *TRUE-MAN* SHOWS UP TO *SAVE* THE CITY! YOU HEAR THAT, *LIBBY?*

WAY AHEAD OF YOU, *PEARLY!*

WINSTON, YOU GO DOWN TO THE MORGUE AND SEE WHAT WE GOT ON PREVIOUS LARGE SCALE DISASTERS!
ON IT, PEARLY!
THE ENTITY, IN CAMOFLAUGE FORM, MINCES INTO THE SOMBER SHADOWS.
WHEEZE
EMERGING INTO THE SHINING LIGHT OF DAY TRANSFIGURED.
IN ITS CORE, A QUANTUM ENGINE OF TESSELATING CELLS ROARS TO LIFE.
IN ITS HEART, AN UNTAINTED SENSE OF PURPOSE POINTS THE WAY.

INFRA-VISION SCANS THE BURNING FACILITY FOR ANYONE TRAPPED WITHIN.

A PERFECTLY DEVELOPED MIND KNOWS *WHAT* IS NEEDED AND *WHERE* TO FIND IT.

THE *ENTITY* PRETENDS NOT TO NOTICE THE *VIXEN* ENDANGERING HERSELF TO GET ITS *ATTENTION*.

PERHAPS IT WILL TEACH HER THAT *LESSON* ONCE THE THREAT TO *SLUMBURG* HAS BEEN *RESOLVED*.

FEARLESS, THE *ENTITY* STEPS INTO A HELLISH *INFERNO*.

AND THE WORDS OF THE *STARFATHER* PEAL LIKE MAGNIFICENT *BELLS* IN THE CATHEDRAL OF ITS *SOUL*.

DUTY.
HONOR.

FAMILY.
NATION.

LOYALTY.
BELIEF.

OBEDIENCE.

HE PUT THE FIRE OUT! ANY *SIGN* OF HIM?

NOT YET. MAYBE IF I STAND CLOSER TO THE *EDGE* HE'LL *SEE ME.*

AGH!

SNICKER

NO! *NO!*

NOOOO!

I'VE GOT YOU.

AWWGHH!

LUCKY FOR *YOU* I WAS ON THE SCENE, *MISS PAYNE.* ARE YOU ALRIGHT?

I-I THINK I NEED TO FIND THE LADIES ROOM.

I ADMIRE YOUR *PLUCK*, MISS *PAYNE*. BUT YOU REALLY SHOULD BE MORE *CAREFUL* IN THE FUTURE!

I-I-I'M A REPORTER, *TRUE-MAN!* CAREFUL ISN'T IN MY JOB DESCRIPTION.

NOW HOW ABOUT THAT *EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW* YOU'VE BEEN PROMISING?

UNLESS OF COURSE YOU'RE JUST, YOU KNOW...

LEADING ME *ON*.

I SAID I'D *CONSIDER* IT, *MISS PAYNE*.

THEN IT'S *SETTLED*. TONIGHT. MY PLACE. OVER DINNER.

THEY SAY I GIVE *GOOD INTERVIEW!*

I'M SURE YOU *WILL*, MISS *PAYNE*.

THE WAY YOU *REGAINED* YOUR COMPOSURE *JUST KILLED!*

AND YOU GOT *HIM* TO *COMMIT!*

HEY, YOU OKAY?

CONCLUDED NEXT ISSUE!

Outside it's about ten degrees and snowing but here in the new studio, with modern heat and classic R&B soul playing in the background, I'm snug as the proverbial bug in a rug. I'm also extremely pleased to be here with another big chunk of the **KING HELL HEROICA** for you. The **HEROICA** is my five graphic novel meditation on the superhero archetype. And this issue brings me within about a hundred pages of finishing the whole furshlugginer thing.

Thanks to all those readers who've hung with it since I debuted **BRAT PACK** back in 1990. My hope, flesh willing, is to publish the last installment of **TRUE-MAN THE MAXIMORTAL** in late 2026 to complete the third novel, then finish off the whole **HEROICA** with **DEATH OF THE MAXIMORTAL** (half-finished and which is a short one) in 2027. Wish me luck!

Some big news coming out of Veitchland since my last **BRAT SACK.** First of which has been **DC Comics'** announcement at **New York Comic Con** that they would publish **SWAMP THING #88,** the controversial issue of my run in which Swampy met Jesus. DC's original refusal to publish the finished issue in 1989 led to my resignation as writer/artist on the series (and to launching the **HEROICA**). Over the decades various brave individuals at the company tried to resolve things and get it published but nothing ever came of it. Then, in 2024, I was approached by DC editor **Alex Galer** with a plan to move forward.

This involved him convincing me to begin writing the follow up issues that complete the story arc before DC had actually made the decision to publish. Needless to say it took some convincing on Alex's part, but he finally won me over.

The guy's a magician. He got me writing, and **Michael Zulli** and **Tom Mandrake** drawing, and before you know it, the thing snowballed into a real discussion within the company on whether or not to seriously go forward. **DC** finally gave the green light. And now it's official. In fact solicitations have gone out for April release.

SWAMP THING 88 will be followed by **89, 90** and **91** with scripts and covers by me and art by **Tom Mandrake.** It will complete the Time Travel story arc I was chugging away on 37 years ago. Sadly, **Michael Zulli** passed away before everything came to fruition.

Next up on the big news front is that I've been inducted into the **Will Eisner Comic Awards Hall Of Fame.** Scanning the list of previous inductees I'm thinking how so many of them provided inspiration through the power of their work to this Vermont kid with a calling. The judges came up with a really interesting and eclectic class this year. I haven't yet decided if I will be attending the July awards ceremony in San Diego, California. Keep an eye on my Facebook page for any announcements.

MY BACK PAGES

SCOPES MONKEY TRIAL: Sometime around 2015, **Steve Conley** and I were promoting our **Eureka Comics** skills to textbook publishers in hopes of bringing comics into classrooms. This ten pager is a short sample we did to demonstrate modern graphic novel techniques wedded to history texts. The original is in color which I don't have the ability to reproduce in this format. But it looks pretty sharp converted to grayscale, I think.

BATTLE ALBUMS: Done for **Sgt. Rock** comics back in 1978. Reproduced from the original art for historical purposes.

SENTRY PITCH ART: Swamp Thing 88 isn't the only messy situation from my comics biz past that has found resolution this year. Back in 1999, **Paul Jenkins** and I collaborated on the initial pitch to **Marvel** for a character called the **Sentry.** Paul brought the idea of a guy trapped in his

apartment, addicted to a super power drug, a dog and a nameless evil presence. He called it the **Centurion.** For my part, I asked why **Marvel** never had a **Superman** level character and then suggested that they did but that something so horrible had happened that the entire **Marvel Universe** had its collective memory wiped. Including **Stan** and the **Marvel** bullpen. Paul and I used anagrams of our real names for the fictional creators of the what we were now calling the **Sentry.** I was to be **Chick Rivet** and Paul was **Juan Pinkles.**

It was a really strong pitch and Marvel went for it but they wanted to pair Paul and **Jae Lee** together again. I got the bum's rush and off they went neglecting to credit or even have me sign off on it. So it lay festering until **Marvel** used the **Sentry** in the **Thunderbolts** movie. In a subsequent interview, I told the story of my involvement in the character's creation. This led to an agreement between myself and **Marvel** which I am delighted with. Here is the original pitch art in which I depict **Sentry** as he would have been through the various **Marvel** decades.

ONE SUFFERS TO PROVIDE FOR THE FAMILY (PABLO'S STORY): This was my contribution to **THE MOST COSTLY JOURNEY,** a collection of short stories about migrant farmworkers in Vermont, published by the **Vermont Folklife Center.** The book was a **2022 Excellence in Graphic Literature** finalist, a **Library Of Congress National Book Festival Selection,** shortlisted for the **Graphic Medicine Award** and selected as the **Vermont Reads Book Of The Year in 2022.** If one is interested in getting past the media distortions and see what real migrants go through and why, copies are available from the Vermont Folklife website: **www.vtfolklife.org**

ZEN PAIN TOMORROW: Have we forgotten?

That's what I got for ya' this issue. Here's hoping that when I finally wrap up the **TRUE-MAN THE MAXIMORTAL** graphic novel with next issue's installment, I'll be able to report that a few other messes from my time in comic book Babylon will have been similarly resolved. See you then.

WE'VE FORGOTTEN.

THE FALL OF ICARUS.

WE'VE FORGOTTEN.

THE COLOR OUT OF SPACE.

ZEN PAIN TOMORROW

WE'VE FORGOTTEN.

THE POWER AND THE GLORY.

WE'VE FORGOTTEN.

RUM, BUGGERY AND THE LASH.

WE'VE FORGOTTEN.

THE IMPLICATE ORDER.

CRACK!

WE'VE FORGOTTEN.

THE EXPLETIVE DELETED.

WE'VE FORGOTTEN.

THE FLOWERS ON THE HILLSIDE.

WE'VE FORGOTTEN.

THE LILLIES IN THE VALLEY.

WE'VE FORGOTTEN.

OUR FIRST LOVE.

WE'VE FORGOTTEN.
OUR SEXUAL AWAKENING.

WE'VE FORGOTTEN.
JACK FROST NIPPING AT OUR NOSE.

WHOOOOSH

WE'VE FORGOTTEN.
THAT WE SIT ON THE THRONE OF CREATION.

WE'VE FORGOTTEN.

THE BIG PICTURE.

WE'VE FORGOTTEN.

HOW THE PINE TREES LAUGH GREEN LAUGHTER.

WE'VE FORGOTTEN.

THE SAME OLD SERPENT.

WE'VE FORGOTTEN.

YOUR NINETEENTH NERVOUS BREAKDOWN.

WE'VE FORGOTTEN.

THE ELEMENTS OF STYLE.

WE'VE FORGOTTEN.

VISION WITHOUT EXECUTION IS HALLUCINATION.

WE'VE FORGOTTEN.

THE JUNIOR WOODCHUCKS MANUAL.

WE'VE FORGOTTEN.

THE THINGS MONEY CAN'T BUY.

WE'VE FORGOTTEN.

THE CENTER CAN'T HOLD.

THE SCOPES MONKEY TRIAL

A EUREKA COMICS PRODUCTION
STORY AND ART: RICK VEITCH
FX AND LETTERING: STEVE CONLEY

I'm ***John Scopes***, and my claim to fame was being the defendant in one of the most ***sensational trials of the twentieth century.***

ATTORNEYS NEAR BLOWS IN EVOLUTION TRIAL ROW

THE DESCENT OF MAN BY CHARLES DARWIN

I didn't steal anything or kill anyone. My crime was teaching ***Darwin's Theory Of Evolution*** in a Tennessee Public School.

In February of ***1925***, Tennessee passed the ***Butler Act***, making it illegal *"to teach any theory that denies the story of divine creation as taught by the Bible."*

And my life got turned topsy-turvy.

Hey, Mister Scopes. They're asking' for ya' down at ***Robinson's.***

John, me and the other boys were wondering if it's possible to teach biology without teaching *evolution*.

Well, George, what I learned at the University was that *evolution is accepted science.*

So you been teaching it? With *this* textbook?

I'm only *filling in* for the regular science teacher. But, yes... I probably assigned the chapters on evolution for review.

Then you're *breaking the law!*

If you believe in *Darwinism*, I expect you'd be willing to stand for a *test case?*

If push comes to shove I guess I'd stand up for what's right...

Excellent! We'll arrange everything!

I'll call the *sheriff*. And the *newspapers*!

I'll wire the *American Civil Liberties Union.*

What have *they* got to do with it?

Didn't you know? The *ACLU* is advertising their services to anyone who will challenge the Butler Act in Tennessee.

Son, thanks to you, we're going to have the *trial of the century* right here in Dayton!

My arrest was cordial, but right off the newspapers played it like a clash of civilizations.

Within a few days two of the most ***famous voices in America*** threw themselves into my case.

The EVENING SUN

BIBLE VS SCIENCE IN DAYTON

William Jennings Bryan, three-time Democratic nominee for the presidency and an ardent proponent of Creationism, joined the prosecution.

Under the pretense of teaching science, instructors who draw their salaries from the public treasury are undermining the religious faith of students.

Clarence Darrow, a civil libertarian lawyer - infamous for successfully using the "*insanity defense*" in scores of sensational murder trials - assisted my defense.

Religious fanaticism has always hampered education. Fundamentalism is the sanctifier of bigotry, narrowness, ignorance and the status quo.

I'd experienced ***Bryan's*** populist rhetoric and deep suspicion of modernism when he spoke at my graduation.

Let those who worship brute ancestors employ their own teachers rather than use public schools to preach their godless doctrine.

Darrow was so scathing in his critiques of religion that the ACLU feared his presence at the trial. I personally had to insist on his participation.

I do not consider it an insult, but rather a compliment to be called an agnostic. I do not pretend to know where many ignorant men are sure.

Bryan and Darrow were two oratorical titans representing both sides of a ***deep cultural schism*** in 1920's America.

The pundits had a field day.

Barnum Outdone

DAYTON, TENNESSEE COURT HOUSE! EVOLUTION TRIAL BIGGEST SHOW ON EARTH!

GREATEST SHOW ON EARTH! EVOLUTION TRIAL DAYTON, TENNESSEE COURT HOUSE!

P.T. BARNUM

The Way Some People See It!

JURY

THE SCOPES CASE

As the trial date neared, ***Robinson's Drugstore*** became home base for the hordes of newspapermen pouring into town.

Long before television was invented, radio, newspapers and people's genuine interest in the issues of the day turned my trial into one of the first ***"media events".***

A lot of people were thinking this was something they could cash in on.

So things in Dayton took on a kind of circus atmosphere.

ANTI-EVOLUTION LEAGUE
"HELL AND THE HIGH SCHOOL"

Three days before the trial, the Royal Palm brought William Jennings Bryan in full form and glory to Dayton.

My friends, I'm here to tell you all the ills from which America suffers can be traced to the ***teaching of evolution!***

I attended his speech at the Hotel Aqua that evening. It was the first of many he would give from pulpit, courthouse lawn or anywhere else people gathered.

The contest between evolution and Christianity is a duel to the death. ***If evolution wins, Christianity goes.***

Bryan and many of the locals were famously savaged in *The Baltimore Sun* newspaper by reporter ***H.L. Mencken.***

"Bryan once had one leg in the White House and the nation trembled under his roars. Now he is a tinpot pope in the Coca-Cola belt and a brother to forlorn pastors who belabor half-wits."

Clarence Darrow announced he was eager to do battle with, ***"the idol of all morondom".*** And that was just the beginning of his ***scorched-earth rhetoric.***

Scopes isn't on trial. ***Civilization is on trial!***

Darwin's Theory of Natural Selection was a major point of contention in a cultural struggle between ***modernism*** and ***fundamentalism.***

And it was all about to come to a head in a Dayton courtroom.

On July 10, 1925, I stood trial for the crime of teaching evolution in a Tennessee public school.

It seemed like the whole nation was quivering with anticipation.

The old courthouse fairly groaned beneath the weight of spectators.

There will be no prolonged applause or stamping of feet lest the roof come down on our heads.

Darrow moved to quash the indictment on both state and federal grounds.

His goal was not my acquittal, but to move the trial to a higher court.

Denied.

After asking the court to take judicial notice of the ***Book Of Genesis*** in the King James Bible, William Jennings Bryan opened for the prosecution.

The purpose of teaching evolution is plain– it is to banish from the hearts of the people the Word of God as revealed!

The Bible is not going to driven out of this court by experts!

Darrow rebutted by questioning the ***literalism*** of the Bible.

The men who wrote Genesis believed, of course, that this tiny speck of mud we call Earth was the center of the Universe; the only world in space.

We know this now not to be true.

All I provided was the body needed to sit at the defense table.

Darwin traces Man's ancestry to ***Old World monkeys***. Not even ***American monkeys!***

The prosecution is opening the doors for a reign of bigotry equal to anything in the Middle Ages!

My other attorney, ***Dudley Malone***, gave an impassioned defense of science which drew an extended applause from the press and spectators.

There is never a duel with the truth. The truth always wins and we are not afraid of it.

The truth is no coward. The truth does not need the law.

The truth does not need the force of government. The truth does not need Mr. Bryan. The truth is imperishable, eternal and immortal and needs no human agency to support it

When the ***court refused to accept expert testimony on evolution***, Darrow's temper got the better of him.

I fail to understand why every suggestion of the prosecution should meet with endless waste of time, and a bare suggestion of anything perfectly competent on our part is immediately overruled.

I hope you do not mean to reflect upon the court?

Well, your honor has the right to hope.

His response became the stuff of legend, and got him a contempt citation.

The court ***did accept expert testimony on the Bible***. So Darrow played his masterstroke.

The defense requests that the renowned Bible expert, ***Mister William Jennings Bryan***, testify.

Bryan didn't ***have*** to take the stand. But as Darrow knew, the so-called ***Great Commoner*** would not be able to resist the public platform.

Because of the opressive heat, the trial moved outside for what *The New York Times* referred to as the ***"most amazing court scene in Anglo Saxon history".***

You have given considerable study to the bible, haven't you, Mr. Bryan?

Yes, I have. I have studied the Bible for about fifty years.

You claim that everything in the Bible should be ***literally*** interpreted?

I believe everything in the Bible should be accepted as it is given there.

Don't you find it hard to believe that Jonah was actually swallowed by a whale?

When you get within the realm of miracles; it is just as easy to believe the miracle of Jonah as any other miracle in the Bible.

When the Bible states Eve was made from Adam's rib, do you believe that to be literally true?

I do.

The Bible says Joshua commanded the Sun to stand still. Is that possible?

The God I believe in could have taken care of that Mr. Darrow.

Now the Bible says God created the heavens in a ***single day***. Was that a twenty-four hour day?

My impression is there were ***periods***, but I would not attempt to argue as against anybody who wanted to believe in literal days.

The only purpose Mr. Darrow has is to slur at the Bible. I want the world to know that this man, who does not believe in a God, is trying to use a court in Tennessee--

I object to your statement. I am exempting you on your fool ideas that no intelligent Christian on earth believes.

In Bryan's admission that everything in the Bible was ***not literally true***, Darrow had what he wanted from his witness.

The next day, as Bryan prepared to give his ***closing oratory***, Darrow provided the *coup de grace*.

The defense moves to ***change its plea to guilty***, your honor.

Bryan had been working on his speech for weeks. He anticipated it to be the greatest achievement of his long and distinguished career.

The court fines you one hundred dollars. Do you have anything to say for yourself, Mr. Scopes?

Your honor, I feel that I have been convicted of violating an unjust statute. I will continue to oppose this law any way I can.

Bryan had won my conviction but lost the debate.

Darrow, the confirmed agnostic, had worked a miracle in that courtroom. It seemed as if the spectators had changed sides in a single afternoon.

A few days later, William Jennings Bryan sat down for one of his characteristically large meals and never got up.

Some swear the trial killed him but Darrow always blamed Bryan's legendary dietary habits.

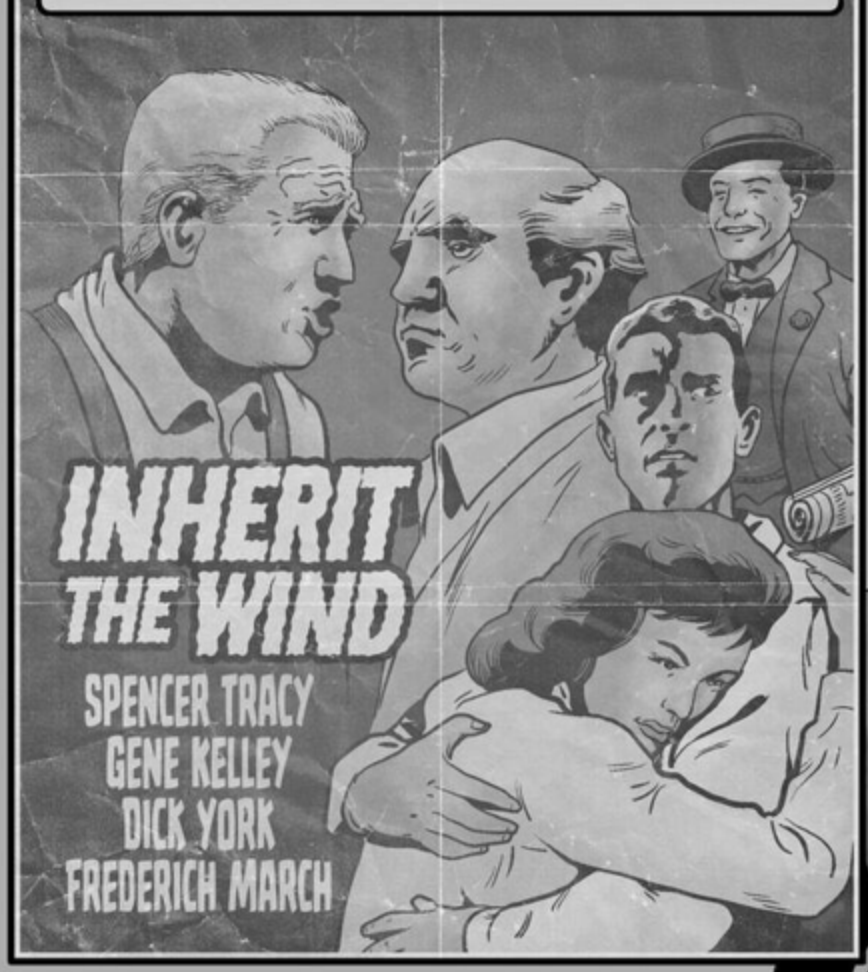
Some say the trial slowed the push for ***anti-evolution bills*** in other states.

But a lot of folks seemed to miss that part of it.

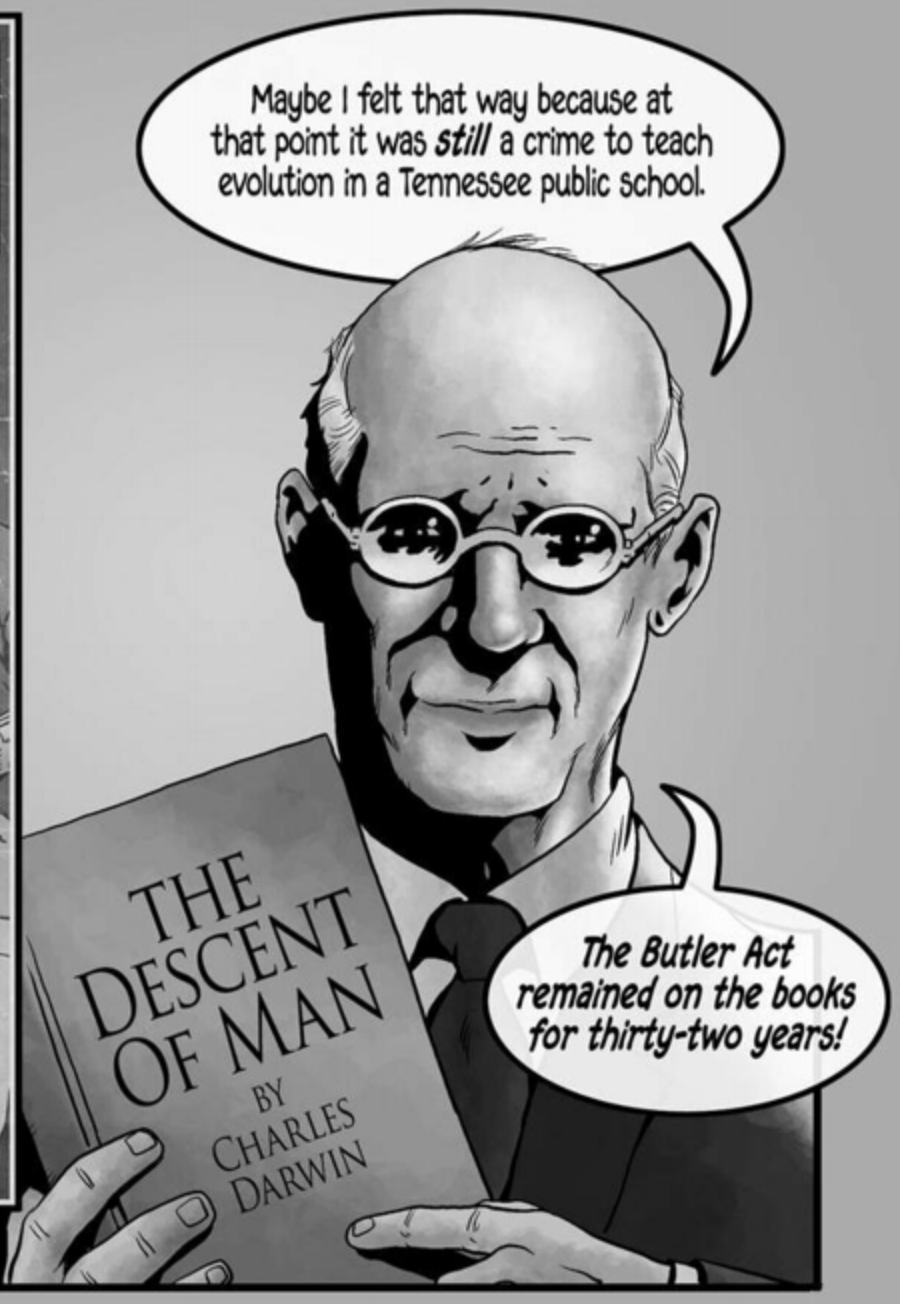
I received offers from movie producers, book publishers, lecture promoters, and proposals of marriage.

I had too much respect for the issues involved in the trial to make a killing on it. All I wanted was peace and emotional stability.

In 1960, they made that movie based on the trial. I got the keys to the city and met the stars and director. I told them, *"A man's fate is often stranger than anything the imagination may produce".*



Maybe I felt that way because at that point it was ***still*** a crime to teach evolution in a Tennessee public school.



The Butler Act remained on the books for thirty-two years!

BATTLE ALBUM!

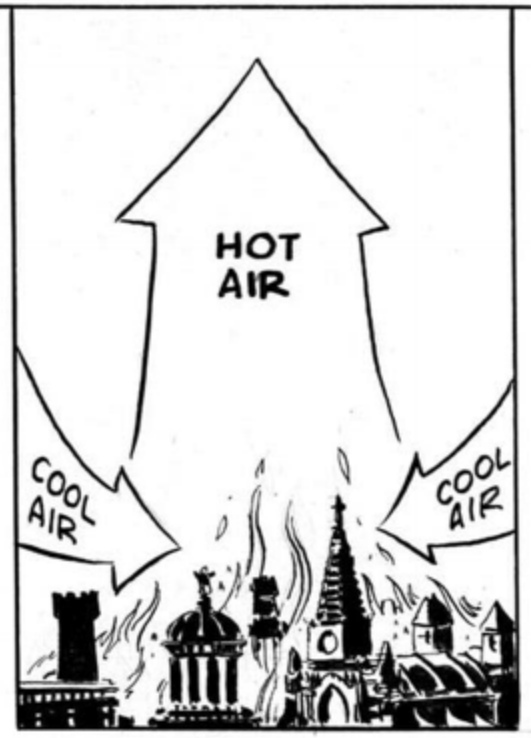
DRESDEN!

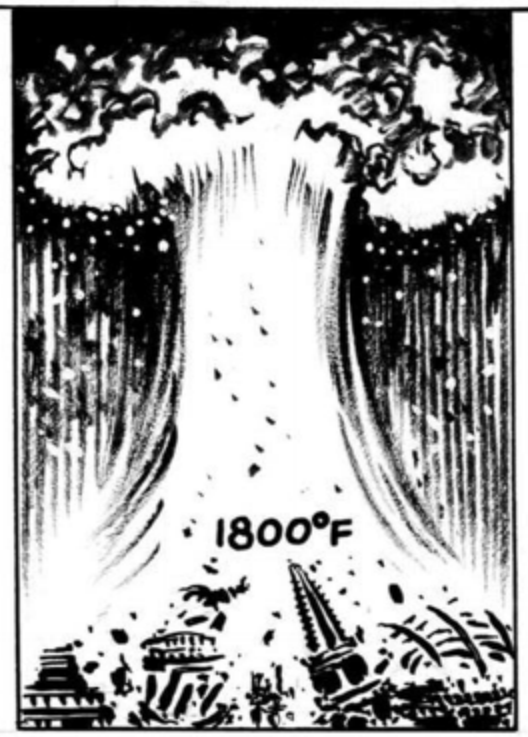
OF **WAR** REPRESENTS THE WORST IN MAN... **DRESDEN** REPRESENTS THE **WORST** IN WAR! SPRING, 1945 -- ONLY WEEKS BEFORE GERMANY'S **SURRENDER** -- THIS ANCIENT PORT ON THE ELBE IS HIT BY THE MOST **SAVAGE** BOMBING OF WORLD WAR II!

1300 **FLYING FORTRESSES** PUMMEL THE CITY... AND **FIRESTORMS** SHRIEK THROUGH THE STREETS LIKE TORNADOES -- SUCKING IN HAPLESS VICTIMS!

FIRESTORM!

THIS GHASTLY PHENOMENON IS CREATED WHEN MANY SMALL FIRES SUPER-HEAT THE ATMOSPHERE CAUSING ***HOT AIR*** TO ***RISE!*** ***COOL AIR*** RUSHES IN TO TAKE ITS PLACE AND THE RESULT IS A ***FLAMING TYPHOON*** OF ***BLAST FURNACE TEMPERATURES!***





SCRIPT: BILL KELLEY
ART: RICK VEITCH

THE SENTRY
PITCH ART

The Sentry is © and ® Marvel Characters Inc.

WORLD WAR II
SENTRY

VEREA
60'S
SENTRY

60'S
SENTRY

70'S
SENTRY

80'S
SENTRY

90'S
SENTRY

PABLO'S STORY

I COME FROM *OAXACA*, A VILLAGE THAT IS CALLED *SAN FRANCISCO LOGUECHE MIAHUATLAN*.

WE WERE A BIG FAMILY, ALL SLEEPING IN ONE ROOM MADE WITH METAL SHEETS.

MY MOTHER COOKED OVER A WOOD FIRE.

I WAS BORN AT HOME WITH A MIDWIFE. MY HAND HAD AN EXTRA FINGER.

THE HOSPITAL WAS REALLY FAR AWAY SO WE COULD NOT AFFORD TO HAVE IT REMOVED.

FROM AN EARLY AGE I WORKED IN THE FIELDS CUTTING *MAGUEY*.

IT'S THE MAIN INGREDIENT OF *MEZCAL*.

I HAD TO WORK TO FEED MY FIVE YOUNGER SIBLINGS.

MY FATHER HAD LEFT US AND LEFT *DEBT* BUT I EARNED SO *LITTLE* I COULDN'T PAY IT.

I WANTED TO STUDY COMPUTERS BUT MY SITUATION WOULDN'T ALLOW IT.

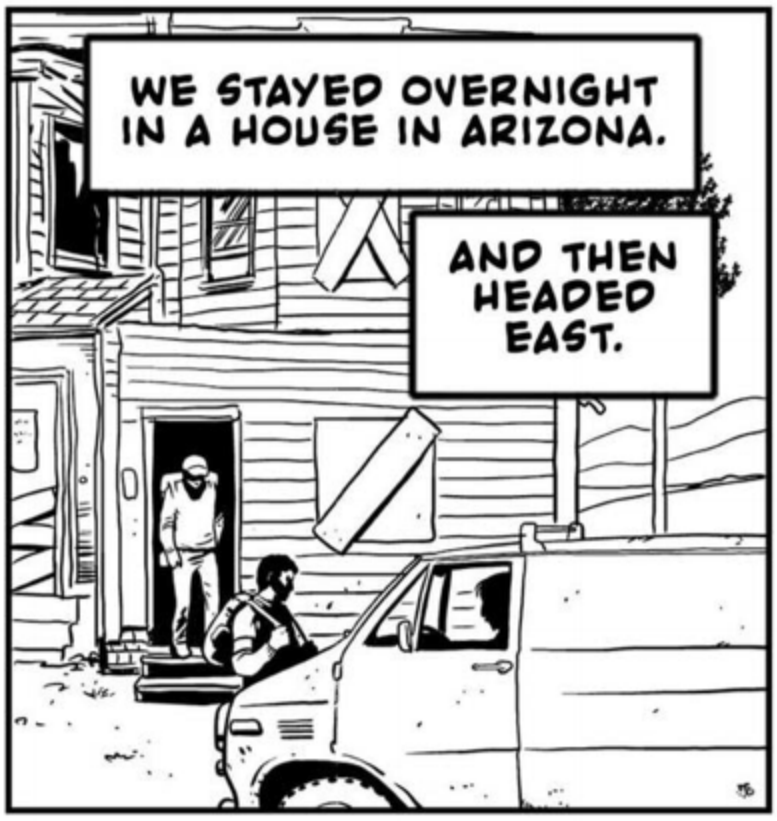
I QUIT SCHOOL AT FOURTEEN.

AT SEVENTEEN I ENTERED THE UNITED STATES.

IT WAS THE ONLY WAY TO PAY OFF THE DEBT.

I CROSSED THE BORDER IN *ALTA SONORA*.

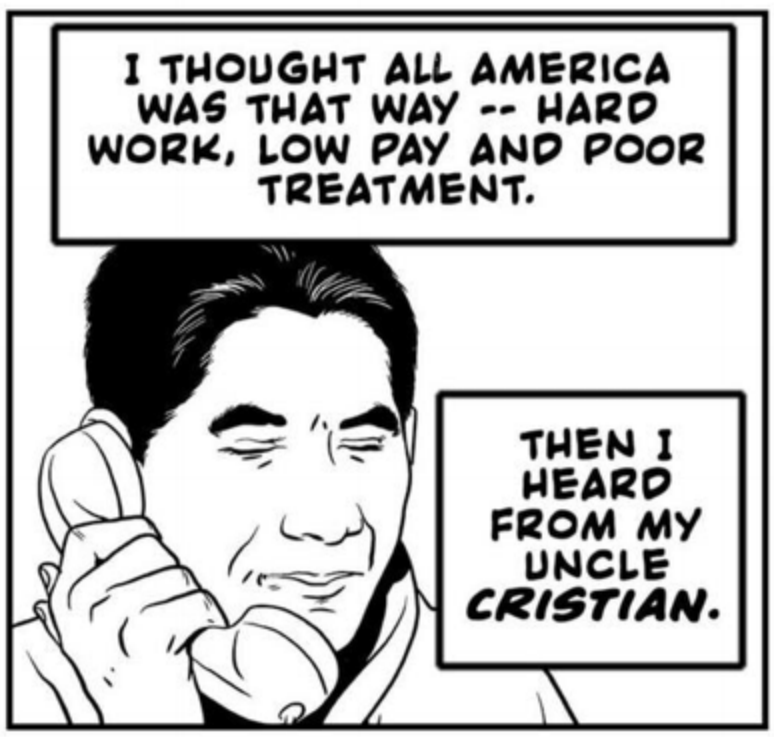
WE WALKED THREE DAYS AND TWO NIGHTS.


WE STAYED OVERNIGHT IN A HOUSE IN ARIZONA.
AND THEN HEADED EAST.

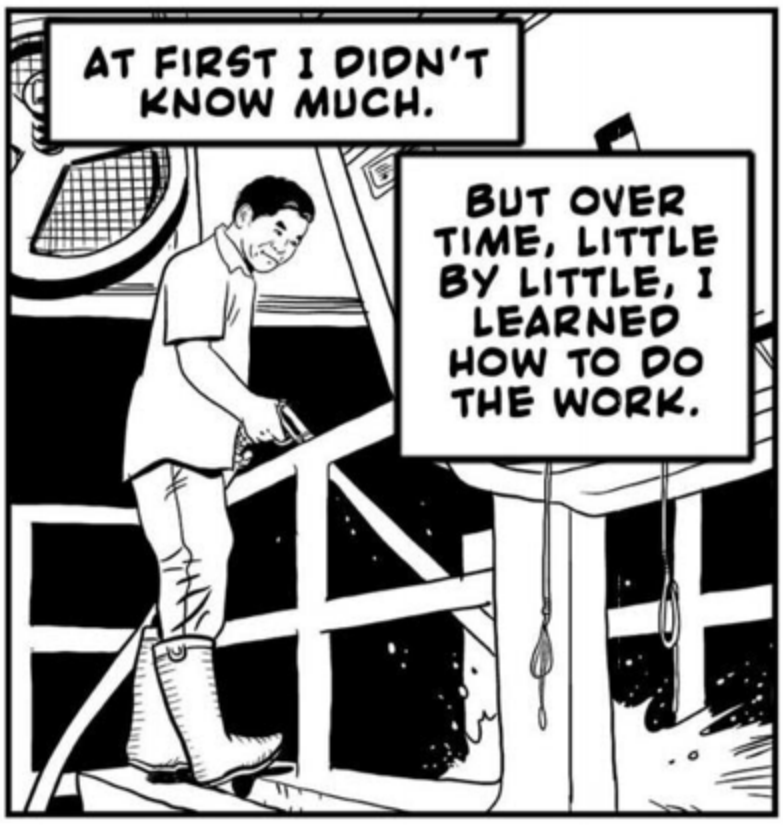
WHEN I FIRST CAME TO NEW YORK, I COULDN'T SPEAK ANY ENGLISH.

I FOUND WORK ON A HORSE FARM BUT IT PAID VERY LITTLE.
THEY DIDN'T TREAT ME WELL EITHER.

THEN I GOT WORK AT A FARM WITH COWS.
THE PAY WAS LOW THERE TOO. AND THE HOURS LONG.


I THOUGHT ALL AMERICA WAS THAT WAY -- HARD WORK, LOW PAY AND POOR TREATMENT.
THEN I HEARD FROM MY UNCLE CRISTIAN.

THERE WAS AN OPENING AT THE DAIRY FARM HE AND MY BROTHER, NICO, WORKED ON IN VERMONT.


AT FIRST I DIDN'T KNOW MUCH.
BUT OVER TIME, LITTLE BY LITTLE, I LEARNED HOW TO DO THE WORK.

HERE I RECEIVED THE BEST TREATMENT OF ANYWHERE IN THE UNITED STATES.

I'VE BEEN HERE SIX YEARS.
MY EMPLOYER AND I ARE LIKE FRIENDS.
LIKE FAMILY ACTUALLY.

OVER TIME, MY EXTRA FINGER STARTED TO BOTHER ME.

MY EMPLOYER TOOK ME TO THE LOCAL CLINIC TO BE EVALUATED. THEN TO THE *SPECIALIST.*

HE HELPED ME APPLY FOR *FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE.*

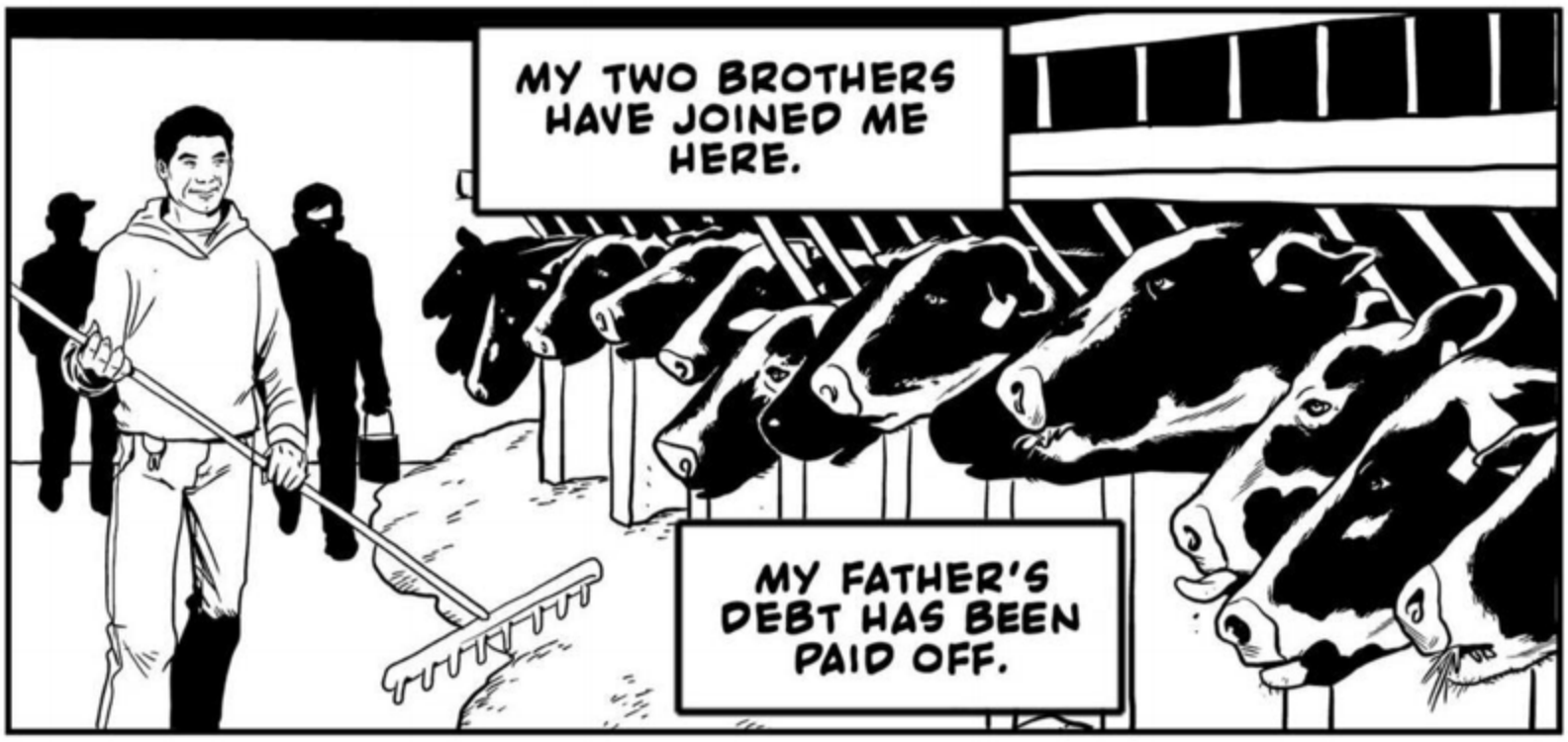
THE HOSPITAL GAVE ME AN INTERPRETER WHO EXPLAINED EVERY LITTLE DETAIL.

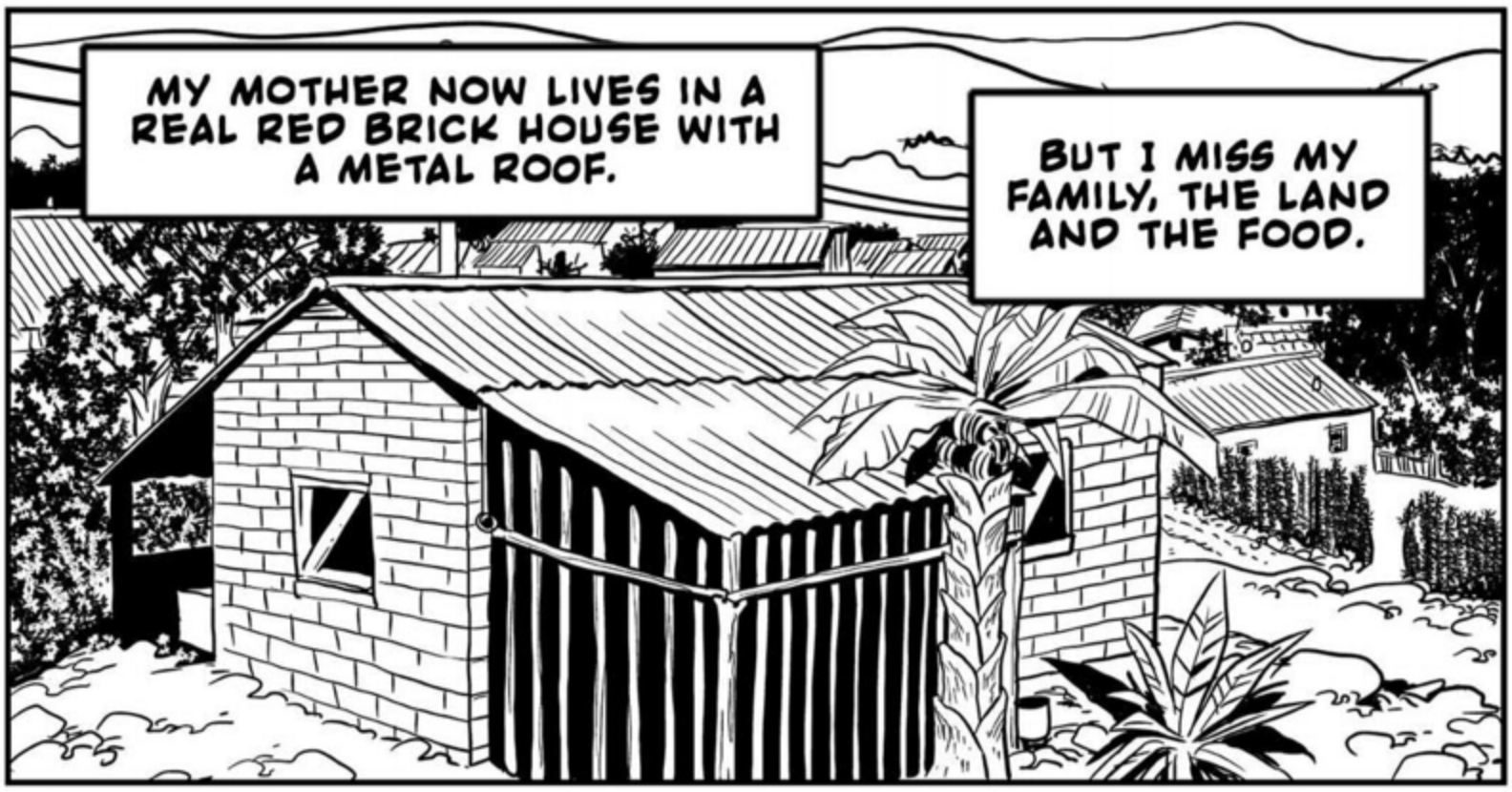
THE DOCTOR SAID THAT HE COULD REMOVE THE EXTRA DIGIT.

IT WAS MY FIRST TIME IN A HOSPITAL.

THEY PUT ME TO SLEEP.

AND NOW I'M STARTING WITH MY NEW HAND.


MY TWO BROTHERS HAVE JOINED ME HERE.
MY FATHER'S DEBT HAS BEEN PAID OFF.


MY MOTHER NOW LIVES IN A REAL RED BRICK HOUSE WITH A METAL ROOF.
BUT I MISS MY FAMILY, THE LAND AND THE FOOD.

I'M LEARNING TO PLAY GUITAR AND ACCORDIAN.
IT DISTRACTS ME WHEN I FEEL SAD.

BATTLE ☆☆

THE YEAR IS 1977... IT IS REPORTED THAT THE UNITED STATES ARMY IS DEVELOPING A NEW **TACTICAL ASSAULT VEHICLE** DESIGNED TO NULLIFY THE POWER OF **HEAVY ARMOR** IN WAR! THE FUTURE MAY SEE SMALL TEAMS OF **SPECIALISTS**, ARMED WITH **HIGH VELOCITY ROCKET GUNS**, RIDING SMALL AIR-BORNE "JEEPS" THAT COVER **300** YARDS AT A JUMP, WREAKING HAVOC AMONG THE HEAVIER SLOW MOVING TANKS.

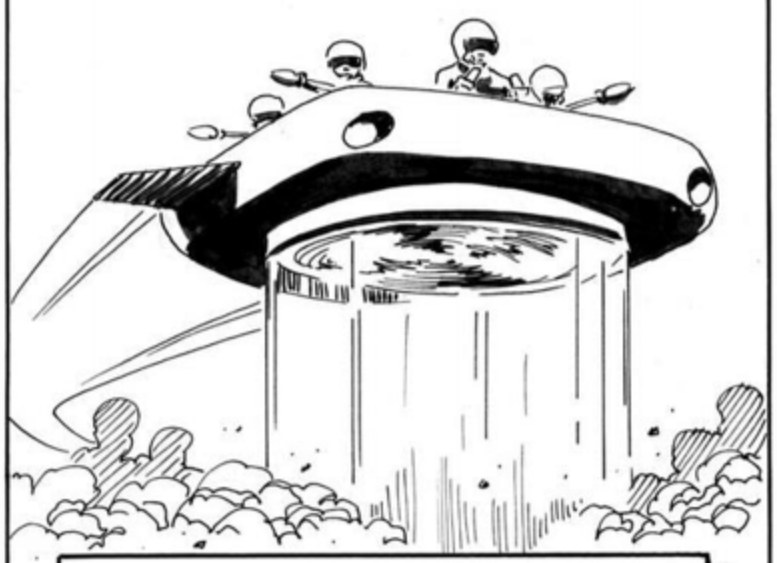
OPERATING OVER ANY TERRAIN, THIS HIGHLY MANEUVERABLE **"JUMPING JEEP"** IS ONLY ONE OF MANY TECHNICAL INNOVATIONS THAT MAY BRING AN END TO THE "AGE OF THE TANK" AND CHANGE THE FACE OF LAND WARFARE!

K-1600

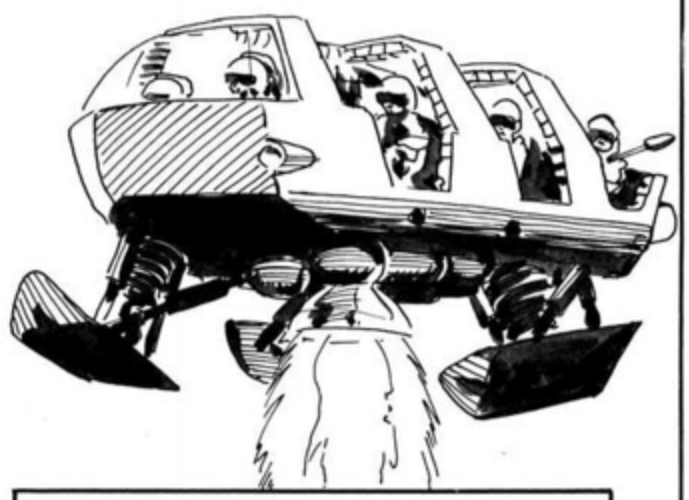
★★ALBUM

HOW WILL THEY DO IT...???

ARMY TECHNICIANS ARE OF COURSE KEEPING THE DETAILS OF THIS HIGHLY ADVANCED WEAPONS SYSTEM UNDER STRICT SECRECY. BELOW ARE SOME SPECULATIONS ON POSSIBLE DESIGNS...



PROPELLED BY BLASTS OF AIR FROM A GIANT FAN, THIS MODEL COULD HOVER INCHES ABOVE THE GROUND OR LEAP HIGH IN THE AIR.



THIS ROCKET POWERED "JEEP" WOULD BE MUCH FASTER, BUT WOULD REQUIRE SOPHISTICATED LANDING GEAR FOR THE ROUGH SET DOWN.

WHO KNOWS? MAYBE THE ARMY EGGHEADS HAVE DESIGNED A "BOUNCE-MOBILE" THAT UTILIZES LARGE TIRES FILLED WITH HELIUM!!?

ZEN RAIN TOMORROW

WE'VE FORGOTTEN.

WORDS ARE SPELLS.

WE'VE FORGOTTEN.

HOW OUR SYMBOLS BECAME THEIR SLOGANS.

WE'VE FORGOTTEN.

THE DEVIL DOESN'T CARE WHICH SIDE WE'RE ON.

WE'VE FORGOTTEN.

LIFE IS A CARNIVAL.

WE'VE FORGOTTEN.

TO WALK ON THE WILD SIDE.

WE'VE FORGOTTEN.

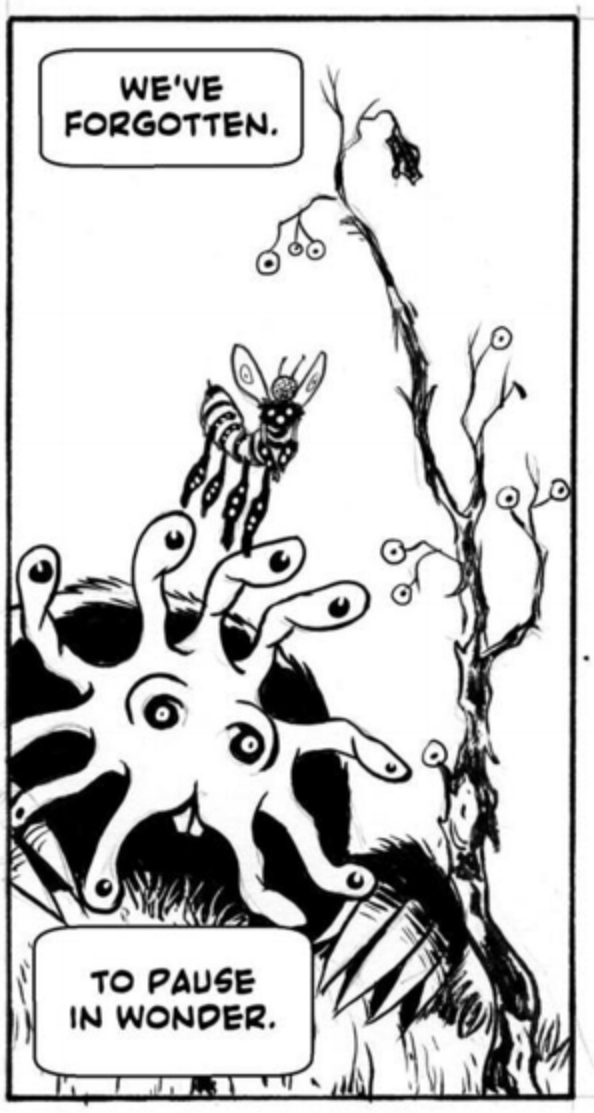
THE CALLUSES ON THE LEFT HAND OF GOD.

WE'VE FORGOTTEN.

THE POT HOLES ON THE ROAD TO DAMASCUS.

WE'VE FORGOTTEN.
THE MEANING OF PRAYER.

WE'VE FORGOTTEN.
WHO'S LEFT HOLDING THE BAG.


WE'VE FORGOTTEN.
TO PAUSE IN WONDER.

WE'VE FORGOTTEN.
HOW TO LEAP TALL BUILDINGS IN A SINGLE BOUND.

WE'VE FORGOTTEN.

HOW TO WARM THE COCKLES OF A HEART.

WE'VE FORGOTTEN.

WHAT WE'RE SEARCHING FOR.

WE'VE FORGOTTEN.

WE ARE VIBRATION AND FREQUENCY.

WE'VE FORGOTTEN.

WHOOOSH

WHO KILLED LAURA PALMER.

WE'VE FORGOTTEN.

HOW LOW WE CAN GO.

WE'VE FORGOTTEN.

TO PUT A TIGER IN OUR TANK.

WE'VE FORGOTTEN.

A MIND IS A TERRIBLE THING TO WASTE.

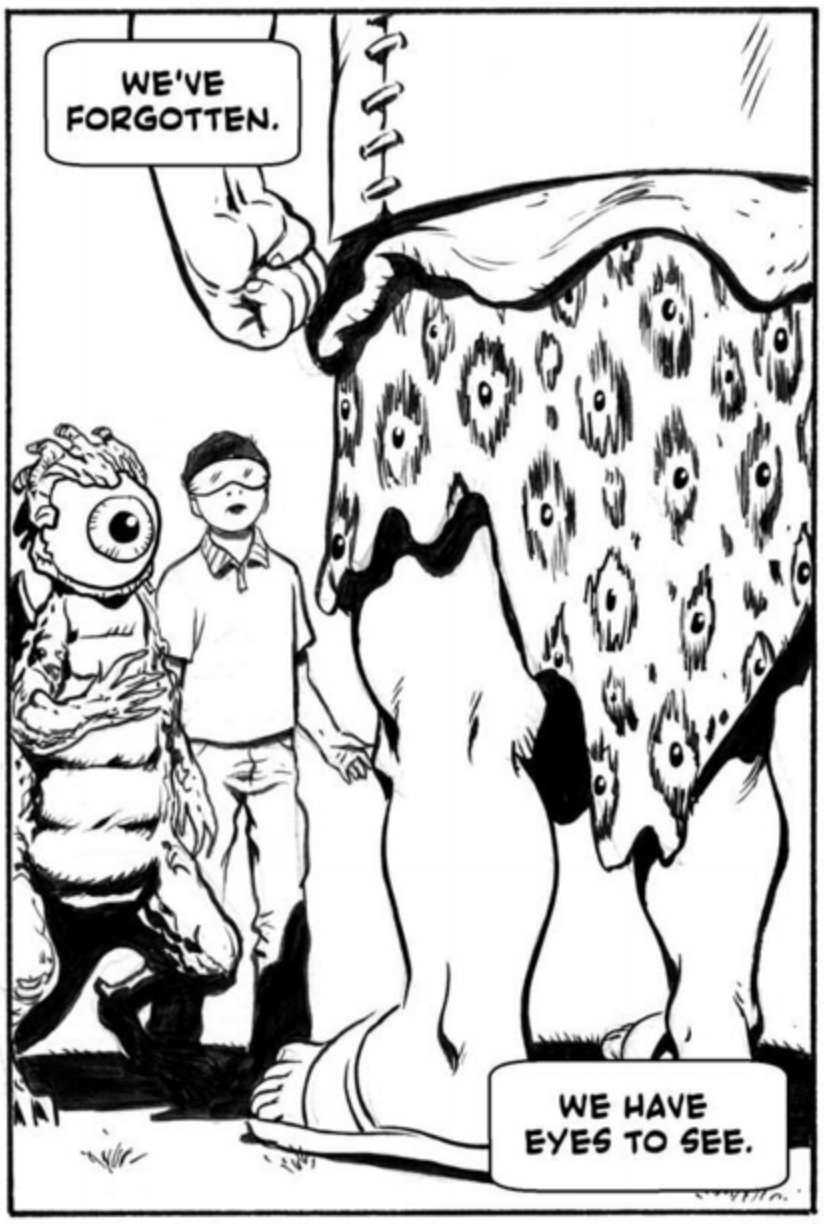
WE'VE FORGOTTEN.

TO KEEP THE HOME FIRES BURNING.

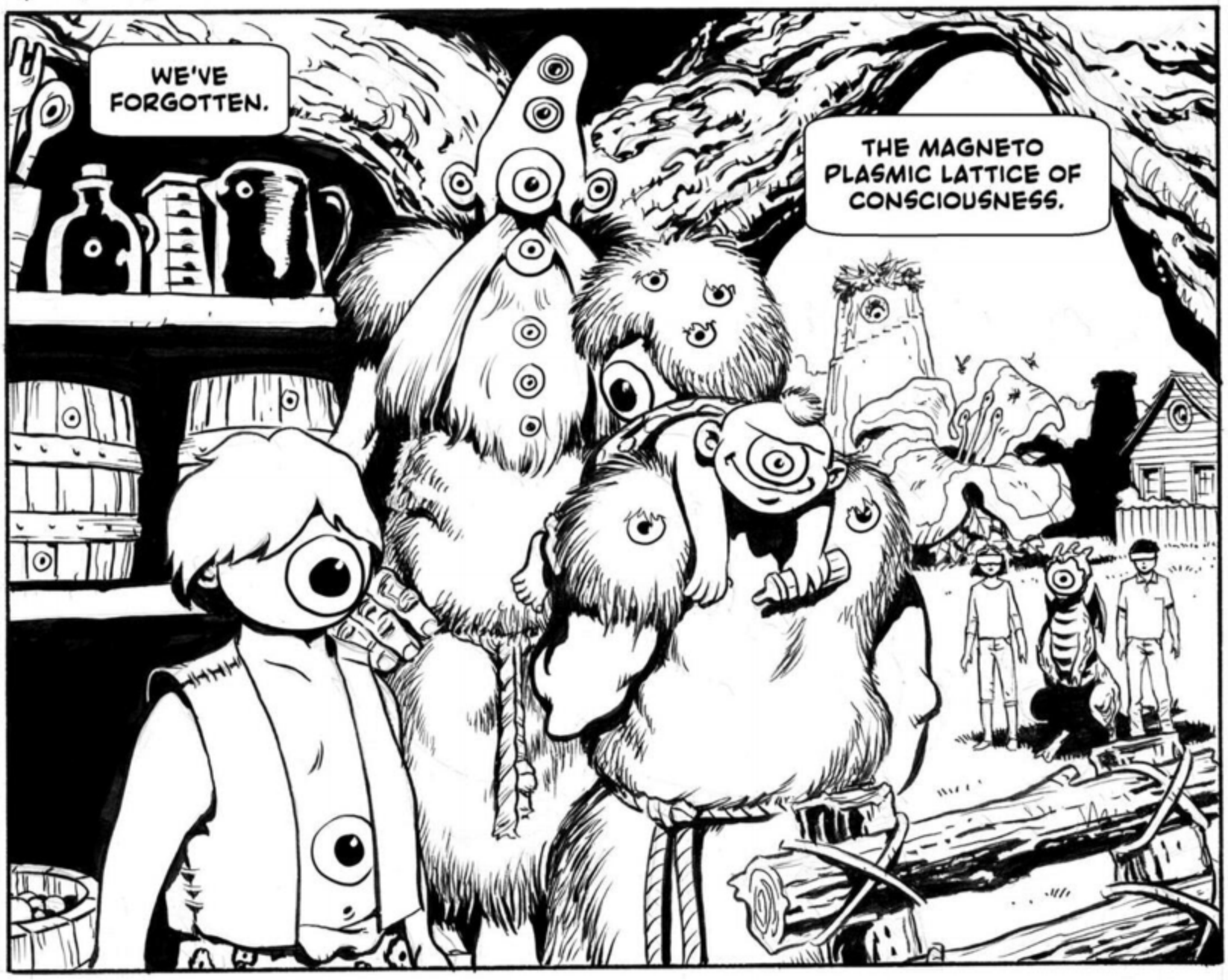
WE'VE FORGOTTEN.

THE STILL POINT.

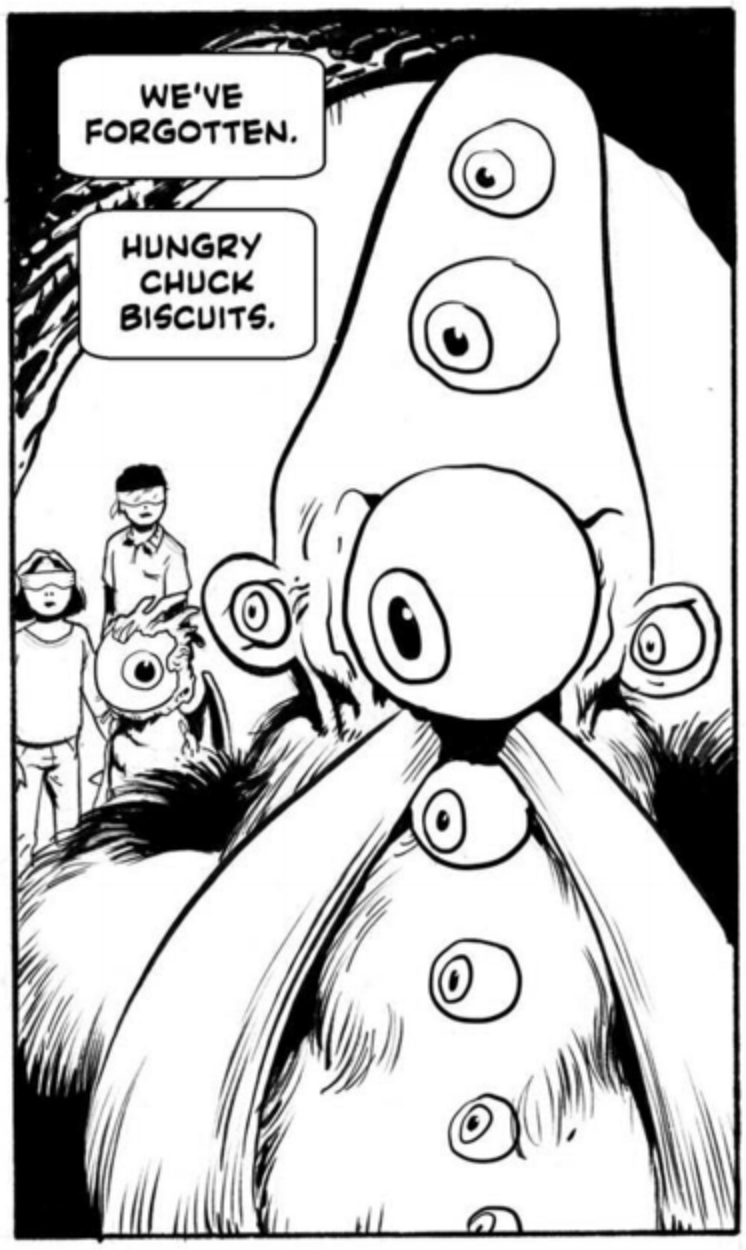
WE'VE FORGOTTEN.
OUR BIRTH PANGS.

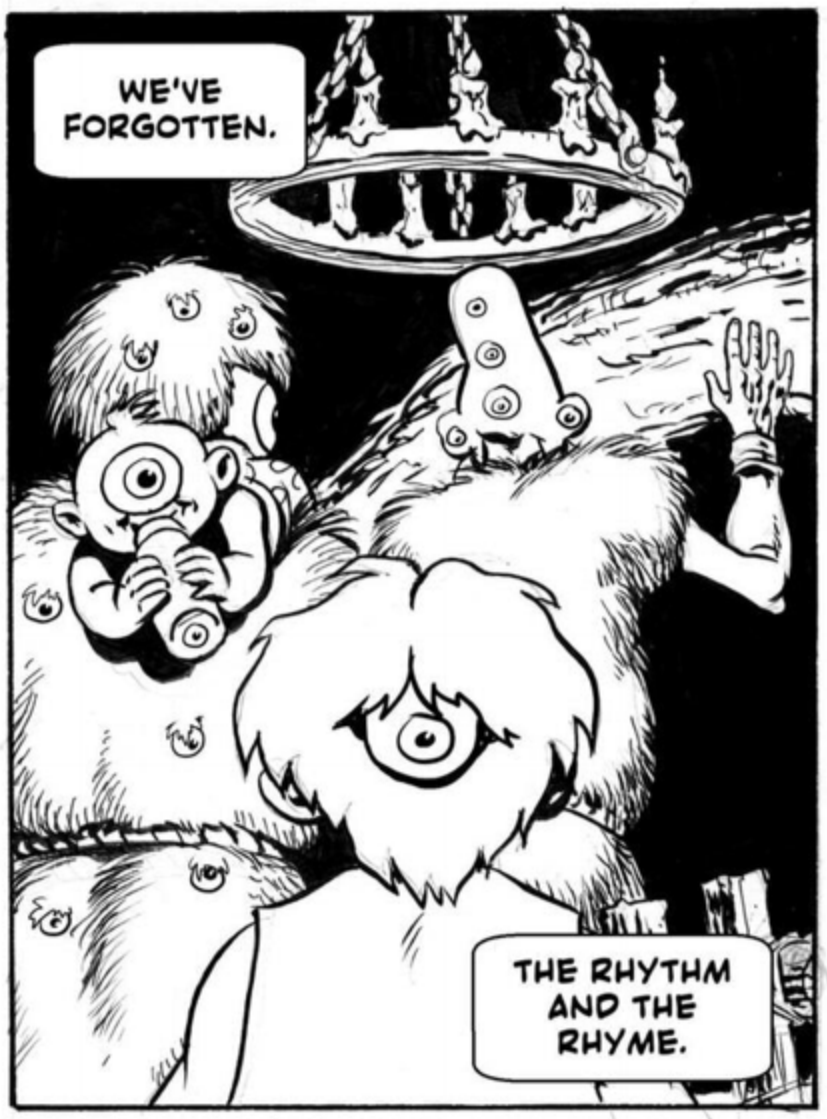

WE'VE FORGOTTEN.
WE HAVE EYES TO SEE.

WE'VE FORGOTTEN.
TO PICK A CARD, ANY CARD.


WE'VE FORGOTTEN.
THE MAGNETO PLASMIC LATTICE OF CONSCIOUSNESS.

WE'VE FORGOTTEN.
DEATH IS THE LAST LOVER.


WE'VE FORGOTTEN.
HUNGRY CHUCK BISCUITS.


WE'VE FORGOTTEN.
THE RHYTHM AND THE RHYME.

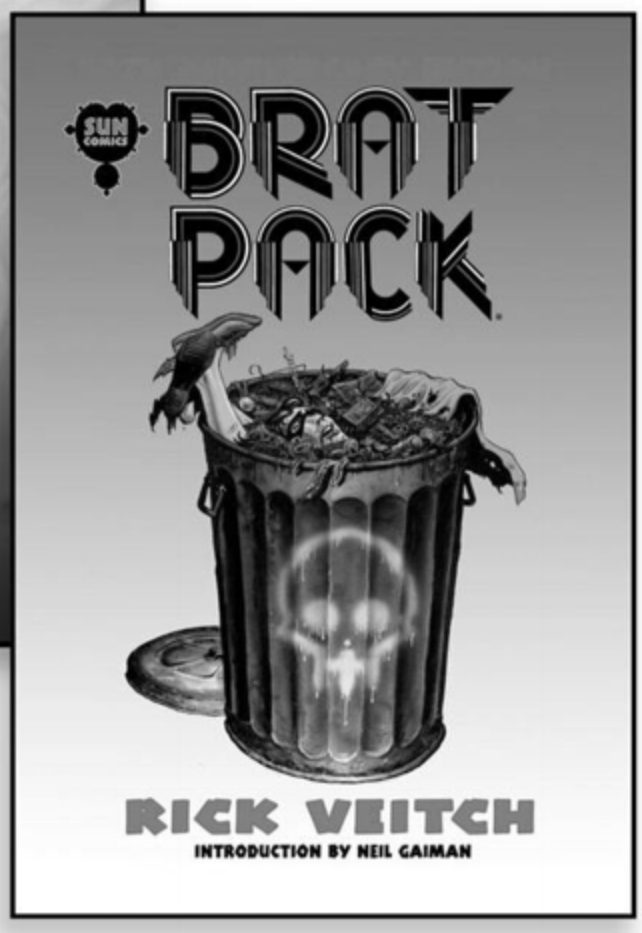
WE'VE FORGOTTEN.
IF WE MADE OUR EASTER DUTY.

WE'VE FORGOTTEN.
THERE'S A SUCKER BORN EVERY MINUTE.

WE'VE FORGOTTEN.
CHUNKY MEANS CHUNKA CHUNKA CHOCOLATE.
AHHH
MMM
TO BE CONTINUED.

RICK VEITCH'S KING HELL HEROICA

SUN COMICS



NOW AVAILABLE IN TRADE PAPERBACK AND E-BOOK:

VOLUME ONE
THE MAXIMORTAL

VOLUME TWO
BOY MAXIMORTAL

VOLUME FOUR
BRAT PACK

COMICS VISIONARY ***RICK VEITCH*** MARRIES THE LARCENOUS HISTORY OF THE COMICS BUSINESS TO THE OUTRAGEOUS THEMES AND CHARACTERS OF HIS INFAMOUS ***BRAT PACK*** UNIVERSE, CREATING ONE OF THE MOST STARTLING AND UNCOMPROMISING VISIONS OF THE SUPERHERO ARCHETYPE EVER PUT TO PAPER.

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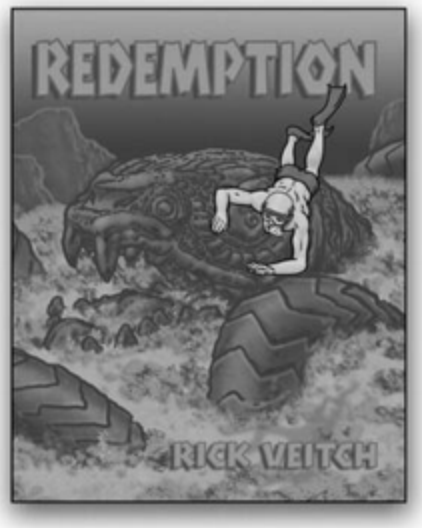
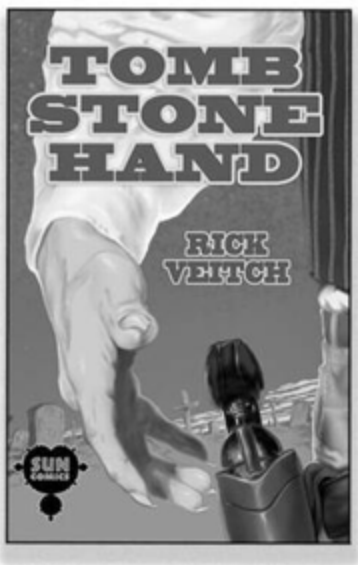
IN A CONNECTED WORLD OF DISCONNECTED PEOPLE, SHE THOUGHT SHE HAD IT ALL AT HER FINGERTIPS. BUT A MYSTERIOUS SPOTTED STONE OPENED A DIMENSIONAL DOORWAY, TRANSPORTING HER TO A STRANGE LAND AND A NEW LIFE UNFETTERED BY TECHNOLOGY. WILL SHE FIND FULFILLMENT BEFORE THE STONE RETURNS?
RICK VEITCH'S HAUNTING STORY, TOLD IN GLORIOUS **PANEL VISION**, IS A FEAST FOR THE EYES AND SOUL!

2018 EISNER AWARD
NOMINEE FOR BEST SINGLE ISSUE/ONE-SHOT

WE KNOW FROM HIS MUMMIFIED REMAINS THAT OTZI THE ICEMAN WAS MURDERED ON AN ALPINE GLACIER 5300 YEARS AGO. BUT WHO SUSPECTED THAT HIS FINAL JOURNEY WAS WAYLAID BY WORMHOLES, PARALLEL UNIVERSES, INTERNET START-UPS AND THE VERY FRINGES OF CHAOS? ENTER A NEW DIMENSION OF GRAPHIC STORYTELLING IN AN ALL NEW **PANEL VISION** BOOK FROM RICK VEITCH.



COMICS MAVERICK **RICK VEITCH** DROPS ANOTHER MIND BOMB IN HIS WILDLY UNIQUE **PANEL VISION** SERIES! **REDEMPTION** TELLS THE VIVID TALE OF ONE MAN CONFRONTING HIS DEEPEST NATURAL INSTINCTS WHILE STRUGGLING TO REMAIN A FUNCTIONING MEMBER OF MODERN SOCIETY. LIKE VEITCH'S OTHER **PANEL VISION** BOOKS, **REDEMPTION** IS A SELF CONTAINED GRAPHIC PARABLE THAT PUSHES THE FORM OF COMICS INTO NEW UNCHARTED TERRITORY.



COMICS COWPUNCHER **RICK VEITCH** SPINS A GRITTY WESTERN YARN WITH MORE TWISTS AND TURNS THAN THE MIGHTY RIO GRANDE. **TOMBSTONE HAND** TELLS THE TALE OF A TENSE GRAVESIDE STAND-OFF IN WHICH A MAN FINDS HIMSELF WITH ONE BOOT HEEL IN THIS WORLD AND ONE IN THE HEREAFTER. AT STAKE IS A TREASURE BEYOND PRICE. ANOTHER SELF CONTAINED GRAPHIC FABLE THAT DELIVERS A READING EXPERIENCE LIKE NO OTHER.

FIND THEM ON AMAZON!

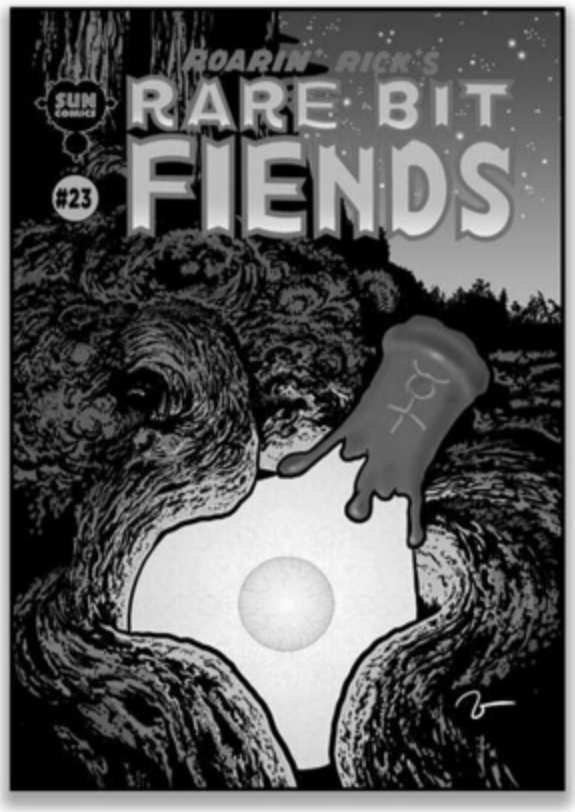
DREAM COMICS: THE FINAL FRONTIER!

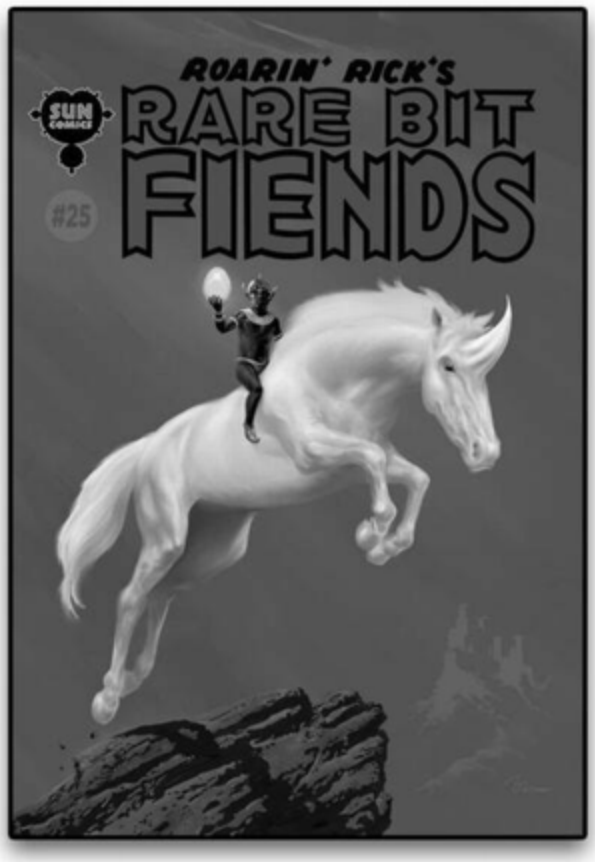
CARTOONIST RICK VEITCH FOLLOWS THE GOLDEN THREAD OF ALCHEMY THROUGH THE EYE OF THE NEEDLE.

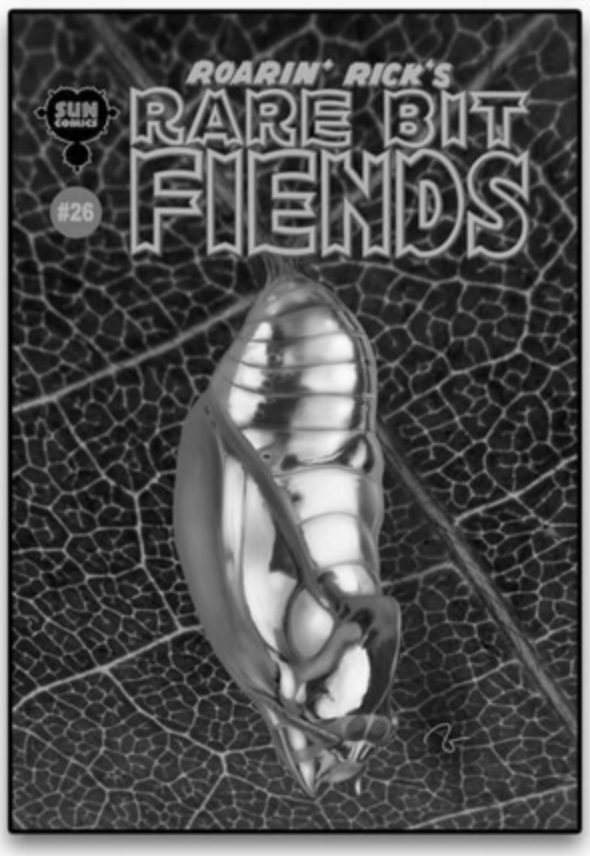
TRIANGULATING DREAMS, MEDITATIONS AND HISTORY ITSELF, VEITCH FINDS MEANING IN AN ANCIENT ARCANE PHILOSOPHY.

NOMINATED FOR TWO EISNER AWARDS!

AVAILABLE ON AMAZON!

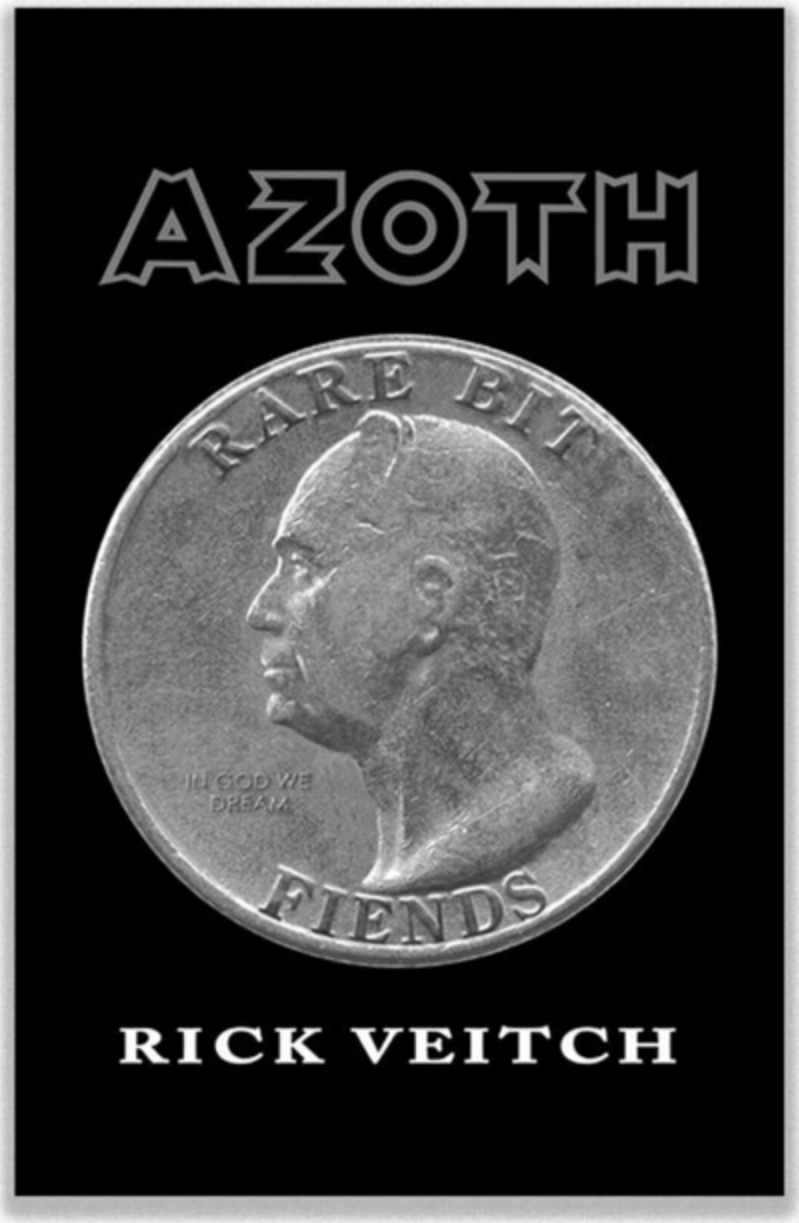






SUN COMICS

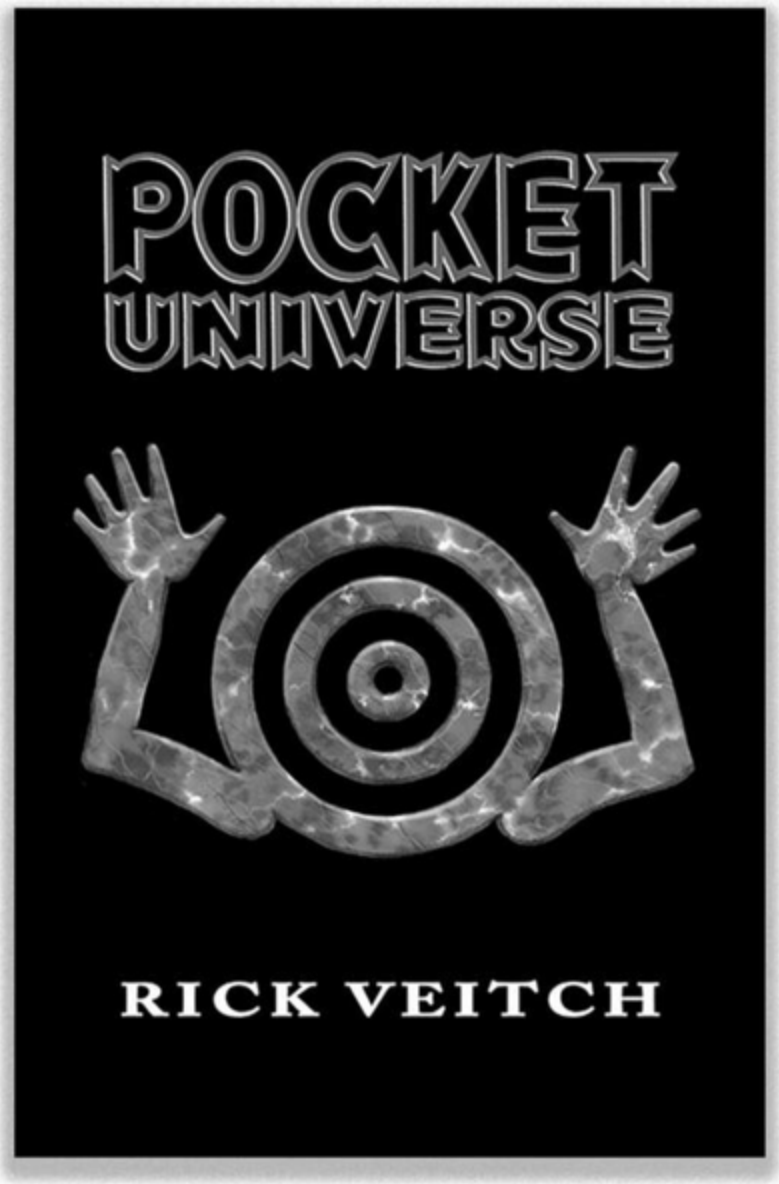
NEW! THE COLLECTED RARE BIT FIENDS NOW IN HARDCOVER!



THIS ***FOURTH COLLECTION*** OF RICK VEITCH'S EISNER-NOMINATED DREAM COMICS CONTAINS A COMPLETE PAIR OF GRAPHIC NOVELLAS, ORIGINALLY SERIALIZED IN ***ROARIN' RICK'S RARE BIT FIENDS #21-25,*** EXPLORING THE DEEPEST MYSTICAL DIMENSIONS OF DREAMING.

SUBTLEMAN FOCUSES ON WHAT VEITCH CALLS SHAMANIC DREAMS; THAT ILLUMINATE AND REVEAL A GREATER REALITY HIDDEN BEYOND OUR FIVE SENSES. DRAWN OVER A TWENTY-FIVE YEAR PERIOD, ***SUBTLEMAN*** CHRONICLES MEETINGS WITH REMARKABLE DREAM PEOPLE, FANTASTIC CREATURES, LIVING MYTHS AND STRAY GODS WHILE CONVEYING THE EXPERIENCE OF TOUCHING HIGHER DIMENSIONS AND THE BLISS OF THE LUCID DREAM STATE.

THE ART OF MERCURIUS DETAILS VEITCH'S PERSONAL INVESTIGATIVE DREAMWORK IN PURSUIT OF A DEEPER COMMUNION WITH PSYCHE AND NATURE, CHARACTERIZED BY VISIONARY EXPERIENCES, SYNCHRONICITIES AND THE APPEARANCE OF AUTONOMOUS DREAM CHARACTERS RIGHT OUT OF 16TH CENTURY ALCHEMY.



RICK VEITCH IS A CARTOONIST WELL KNOWN FOR CUTTING TO THE QUICK, AND HIS GROUND BREAKING DREAM COMIC, ***RARE BIT FIENDS,*** CONTINUES TO ENTERTAIN AND INTRIGUE READERS REGULARLY WITH SOME OF THE MOST PERSONAL AND REVELATORY PANEL ART BEING PUBLISHED TODAY. NOW, IN THIS ***SECOND RARE BIT FIENDS HARDCOVER COLLECTION,*** HE GETS YOU SO CLOSE TO THE QUICK YOU CAN JUST ABOUT TOUCH IT! WELCOME TO ***POCKET UNIVERSE,*** IN WHICH VEITCH COMBINES THE ULTIMATE IN POST-MODERN STORYTELLING WITH HIS BRAVURA CROWQUILL AND INK ILLUSTRATIONS TO RECREATE THE DEEPEST LEVELS OF DREAMING AS A STARTLING AND SUBTLE SET-PIECE OF SENSATIONAL PSYCHO-ART. ARE ART AND LIFE ONE? ENTER RICK VEITCH'S ***POCKET UNIVERSE*** AND LEARN THE SIMPLE TRUTH!

INCLUDED IN THIS HARDCOVER EDITION ARE THE ***COMPLETE ROAD BITS*** DREAM SKETCHES, COLLECTED ON THE CONVENTION CIRCUIT FROM DOZENS OF THE ***WORLD'S GREATEST COMIC BOOK ARTISTS!***

AVAILABLE ON AMAZON!

DESPITE THE TITLE, SATISFACTION IS VERY MUCH WHAT YOU GET FROM RICK VEITCH'S NEW GRAPHIC NOVEL. THIS IS A FASCINATING, DREAM-LIKE LOOK INTO THE LIFE OF A MAN WHO'S SUCCESSFUL AT BUSINESS AND WAKES UP ONE DAY TO FIND HIS LIFE FALLING APART. AND THEN, 9/11 HAPPENS. VEITCH HAS NEVER SHIED AWAY FROM BIG QUESTIONS, AND AS SUCH HAS PRODUCED SOME OF THE MOST THOUGHT-PROVOKING AND OPINIONATED COMICS OF THE PAST 20 YEARS. CAN'T GET NO CONTINUES THAT TREND, TELLING A STORY WITH POEM-LIKE SCRIPT AND NO DIALOGUE. THE ART IS EXCELLENT, AS WELL, HAVING ALL THE QUALITIES THAT MAKE COMIC ART COMPELLING FROM EXCELLENT STORYTELLING TO IMAGES THAT CAN ONLY BE BROUGHT TO LIFE ON THE PAGE. A QUICK BUT DEEP READ, EVEN AT MORE THAN 300 PAGES, THIS IS A TOP-NOTCH BOOK THAT LIKELY WILL INSPIRE, OFFEND AND CONFUSE IN EQUAL AMOUNTS. WHAT IT IS GUARANTEED TO DO IS MAKE YOU THINK AND FEEL. GRADE: A

VARIETY

RICK VEITCH'S AMBITIOUS "CAN'T GET NO" IS NOT ONLY A LANDMARK GRAPHIC NOVEL OR, MORE ACCURATELY, A GRAPHIC EPIC POEM; IT'S ALSO ONE OF THE MORE THOUGHTFUL AND EVEN SATISFYING ARTISTIC RESPONSES TO SEPT. 11 TO DATE.

TAKING ADVANTAGE OF COMICS' UNIQUE ABILITY TO SUSPEND AND BEND TIME, VEITCH ENVISIONS AN ALL-AMERICAN CROSS-COUNTRY ODYSSEY WITH ROOTS IN RENAISSANCE ARTIST ALBRECHT DURER'S HARD-CORE CHRISTIAN ALLEGORIES.

THERE'S NO DIALOGUE, PER SE, ONLY THE ONGOING GNOSTIC RUMINATIONS OF AN ANONYMOUS NARRATOR WHO STRIKES A TONE SOMEWHERE BETWEEN POET JOHN ASHBERY AND THE CYNICAL BULLET POINTS OF "THE COLBERT REPORT." AS WE PONDER A GIANT BUST OF JOHN F. KENNEDY OVER SEVERAL PANELS, VEITCH'S NARRATOR INVOKES "THE ETERNAL FLAME ... IT COMES COMPLETE WITH AN INTELLIGENCE AGENCY. THE BLACK-OPS KIND THAT RUNS THINGS OUT OF A SECRET HEADQUARTERS ... AND STANDS BEHIND EVERY SUCCESSFUL MAN." HEADY STUFF INDEED, AND ALL THE MORE SO THANKS TO VEITCH'S PROPULSIVE BLACK-AND-WHITE IMAGERY. WITH ICONS LIKE THE TWIN TOWERS TO DEPLOY, "CAN'T GET NO" MAY REPRESENT HIS OWN ETER-NO-MARK.

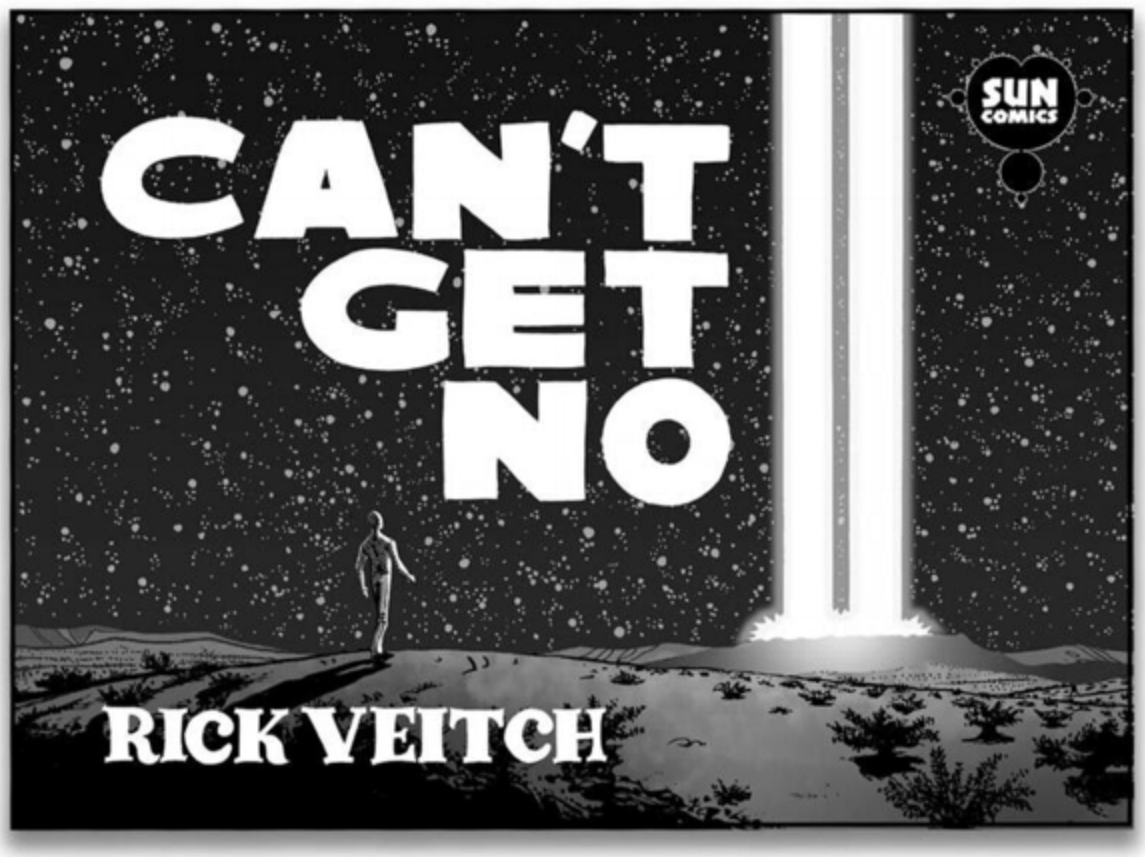
RICHARD GEHR
NEWSDAY

VERTIGO HAS ALWAYS OFFERED INSPIRED AND INTELLIGENT BOOKS, BUT IT HAS RARELY PUBLISHED A BOOK THAT TAKES AS MANY CHANCES AS CAN'T GET NO. IT COULD EASILY HAVE FAILED, BUT VEITCH MAKES IT WORK. THIS IS ONE OF THE BEST GRAPHIC NOVELS VERTIGO HAS EVER PUBLISHED.

IGN.COM

THE NOVEL FORCES US TO THINK ABOUT HOW WE MAKE SENSE OF LIVED EXPERIENCE AND HOW WE PROCESS THAT EXPERIENCE BOTH IN VISUAL AND LINGUISTIC TERMS. IT INVITES A NEW METHOD OF PROCESSING TRAUMA AND DISILLUSIONMENT–ONE THAT PUSHES BOUNDARIES EVEN FURTHER THAN ART SPIEGELMAN'S LANDMARK MAUS. CAN'T GET NO IS A BOOK THAT NEEDS TO BE READ.

GUTTERGEEK

NEWLY REMASTERED EDITION AVAILABLE ON AMAZON

SUN COMICS